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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

**HOW IS RELIGION RACIALIZED: EXAMINING ANTI-MUSLIM
RACISM THROUGH CAMPUS CLIMATE, CIVIC PARTICIPATION
AND RACIAL BELONGING**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

SOCIOLOGY

with an emphasis in CRITICAL RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES, and EDUCATION

by

Saugher Nojan

June 2021

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

How is Religion Racialized?:

Examining Anti-Muslim Racism through Campus Climate, Civic Engagement and
Racial Belonging

By

Saugher Nojan

After the 2016 Presidential election, students on a California university campus threatened and attempted to rip off a Muslim women's hijab. The persistence of anti-Muslim racism in U.S. society two decades following September 11, 2001, reveals deeper colonial roots of the racialization of religion. Muslim Americans worldwide and in the U.S. continue to experience overt violence in public places, including schools. Yet, studies on Muslim college students' experiences focus primarily on interpersonal racism from interactions with school officials and students. Few consider how the global War on Terror permeates higher education's bounds to institutionalize anti-Muslim racism. Further, studies of Muslim racialization primarily sample Arab and South Asian Muslims while focusing on the Muslims' collective religious identity, thus overlooking the racial heterogeneity of this community.

This study advances an understanding of anti-Muslim racism as a fluid racial project that manifests through hyper(in)visibility - both the overt and covert racial mechanisms that institutionalize racial-religious inequality. My results rely on multivariate analyses of 2016 University of California Undergraduate Surveys (N=63,115), qualitative analysis of 85 in-depth interviews with Muslim students, and

a case study of a participatory action research photovoice project. Chapter 2 introduces racial-religious decoupling to explain why Muslim students felt the lowest institutional belonging compared to other religious groups. Chapter 3 shows that Muslims have higher odds of participating in voluntary organizations than their religious and non-religious peers because of their racialized religion and Muslims' altruistic faith values. Chapter 4 proposes anti-Muslim ethnoracism to explain the visible and invisible elements of racialization concerning Muslim subgroups' imperial, ethnonational and migrant backgrounds. Chapter 5 demonstrates how racial naturalization as racial- and Muslim-Other produces divergent conceptions of citizenship, nationalism, and race. Finally, this study reveals how religion is racialized and experienced amid other salient targeted identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, refugee background, and imperial and colonial contexts. By examining in-depth case studies, and inter-religious, intra-racial comparisons, this study reveals the intersectional variations that lead to differential experiences with institutional racism, civic participation, and racial belonging.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After the 2016 Presidential election, a student walking on a California university campus was threatened by other students to have her hijab ripped off. This would not be the first time that she or other Muslim women received such threats (Woodrow 2017). In fact, for nearly two decades following September 11, 2001, Muslim women around the U.S. have experienced violence in public places - particularly in schooling contexts from K-12 up to university (Bajaj, Ghaffar-Kucher, and Desai 2016; CAIR 2017; McCollum 2017). These events suggest that anti-Muslim sentiments manifested throughout society occur even within liberal university contexts committed to diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion (Chatterjee and Maira 2014; Pratt 1991; UCOP 2014).

In the current U.S. context of blatant racism, nativism, and anti-Muslim sentiments, many communities of color are targeted through State policies and discourses that define them as Others that deserve to be banned or deported. According to reports by the Council on American Islamic Affairs (CAIR), Muslim Americans experienced more instances of blatant and implicit discrimination in one year following the 2016 election than in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Cainkar and Selod 2018). Many of the War on Terror (WOT) State-sanctioned processes of racial profiling and unconstitutional policies targeting Muslims, South, West Asian, Arab and North African (SWAANA) people today have

roots in the Cold War period of heightened anti-Arab and anti-Iranian racism related to U.S. imperial ambitions; these were then exacerbated and extended during the War on Terror (e.g. Patriot Act and National Security Entry-Exit Registration System [NSEERS]).

This study seeks to understand how anti-Muslim racism functions within the sociopolitical juncture following President Trump's election. My mixed methods study draws upon three sources of data: 1) 2016 UC- Undergraduate student experience survey (UCUES) 2) in-depth interviews with 90 Muslim American UC students and 3) a case study of a participatory action research project. This comparative racialization study Muslim college students (e.g. Muslim and non-Muslim Black, White/MENA, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Latinx youth) from immigrant and refugee backgrounds is primarily in conversation with four sets of scholarship: (1) research on the campus racial climate (2) opportunities and barriers to college campus civic engagement and political activism, and (3) theories of racial formations and anti-Muslim racism and (4) immigrant and refugee racialization.

Ultimately, this study contributes to an understanding of racialization processes by showing how anti-Muslim racism manifests in different contexts. My dissertation argues that anti-Muslim racism pervades through both visible and invisible racial mechanisms. Up to this point, Muslim racialization has focused on the very visible, gendered Muslim figure and phenotypic, cultural, and national markers that cue a conflation with terrorism. As a whole, this dissertation argues that while

these visible tropes persist, anti-Muslim racism also operates through hyper-invisibility - produced through covert racialized schemas embedded within institutions, intersectional oversights of competing and intersecting racial projects, racialized hauntings of imperial and migrant histories, and racial ascriptions that promote cultural and political erasure.

Campus Climate and anti-Muslim Racism

One of the sites I examine the manifestation of anti-Muslim racism is higher education. I use higher education to study how anti-Muslim racism may be institutionalized because prior studies that suggest universities are “firmly embedded in global structures of repression, militarism and neoliberalism” (Chatterjee and Maira 2014: 3). In the aftermath of the War on Terror, the State targeted not only Muslim Americans considered “terrorist-suspects,” but also immigrants, refugees and left-wing progressive academics and students critical of State practices (Ali 2016; Chatterjee and Maira 2014; Selod 2016). The imperial university context is important to study given explicit commitments by public universities, namely the University of California, “to foster respectful, inclusive and diverse communities” (UCOP 2014).

Today, more and more students of color are being admitted into universities that have been historically unprepared to support them (Hurtado 1992; Hurtado et.al. 2008; USC 2017; Harper and Hurtado 2007). Campus climate reports indicate that students of color, especially African Americans, continue to experience hostile racial climates compared to White peers contributing to uneven academic experiences

across racialized groups (Ancis, Sedlacek, and Mohr 2011; Reid, Landon and Radhakrishnan 2003; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Hurtado and Guillermo-Wann 2013; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Harper and Hurtado 2007; Yosso et al. 2009). Couple this with wartime repression on university campuses and receding civil liberties enforced through the Patriot Act, the university offers an important “contact zone” where “power is negotiated and struggle occurs” as “cultures meet, clash and grapple with one another” that requires researchers’ attention (Nasir and Al-Amin 2006; Pratt 1991). This struggle is indicative of how the university may also be a site of civic participation, resistance, as well as a site of repression (Pratt 1991).

The experiences of Muslim American students yield empirical and analytic insights given their increasing hyper(in)visibility on college campuses and the growing body of literature documenting Islamophobia in higher education (Ali 2014; Bowman and Smedley 2013; Cole and Ahmadi 2010; Mir 2009; Nasir and Al-Amin 2006). Higher education studies on Muslim students suggest that they experience blatant forms of racism that result in an increased likelihood of suspicion and vigilance, resulting in some Muslim American students experiencing mental and physical health problems (Nadal et al. 2012). Stereotypes of Muslims include raced and gendered labels as foreign, terrorist, oppressed, and backward (Ali 2014). Being perceived in this way creates anxiety for students and has implications for student success. Among Muslims, there are significant gendered differences. Women who wear the hijab (veil) are at additional risks for experiencing harassment, instances of marginalization, prejudice, and discomfort due to the hypervisibility/physical

embodiment of their religion (Seggie, Nevra, and Sanford 2010). Non-visible Muslims also feel vulnerable due to stereotype threats, or the fear of being judged by stereotypes related to their social identity (Steele 1998; Nasir and Al-Amin 2006). Although Muslims perform academically similarly to other religious groups such as Christians and Jews, they are less satisfied with their educational experiences than these groups (Cole and Ahmadi 2010; Nasir and Al-Amin 2006). Muslim students' dissatisfaction may be due to the burden of representation these individuals feel as a result of continually managing impressions with their professors and peers (Ali 2014; Nasir and Al-Amin 2006; Sirin and Fine 2008). It may also be a result of structural conditions that sustain and perpetuate White and Christian normativity (Bowman and Smedley 2013).

However, few studies examine how anti-Muslim racism manifests structurally or institutionally in higher education contexts through a race perspective (Love 2017; Cole and Ahmadi 2010). For this reason, my study examined how anti-Muslim racism manifests at the institutional level, in relation to campus climate. Campus racial climate research suggests that university contexts need to actively support students of color in order to mitigate structures of Whiteness that create hostile environments that fuel both covert and overt forms of racism (Garcia and Johnston-Guerrero 2015; Gusa 2010; Pewewardy and Frey 2002; Rankin and Reason 2005; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Yosso Smith, Ceja, and Solórzano 2009). However, campus racial climate studies have rarely incorporated Muslims as a racialized group, in their racial analysis of student outcomes. Rather, most campus climate studies on Muslim

Americans compare their experiences with other religious groups which overlook how race and religion intersect to shape the experiences of Muslim Americans with discrimination. To address this gap, my study examines, how does anti-Muslim racism manifest in university contexts, and to what extent does it shape campus climate or Muslims' perceptions of campus climate? To what extent does anti-Muslim racism shape Muslim students campus engagement?

Ethnoracism and Anti-Muslim Racism

In addition to comparing the experiences of Muslim students across Muslim and non-Muslim racial groups, I also look deeply at one Middle Eastern North African subgroup, Central Asians, that are racially invisible in higher education institutions because of their classification as MENA and hence White. Studying Afghan-Americans is essential to provide better understandings of how the hypervisible (Muslim identities) interact with the invisible (ethnic, refugee, imperial contexts) as part of racializing processes. The U.S. War in Afghanistan that began after the 2001 terrorist attacks, justified targeting Afghan-Americans based on their national origin and their religion as Muslims. Given the U.S.'s covert role in the Soviet-Afghan war and its current occupation of Afghanistan, scholars have suggested that Afghans hold imperial subjectivities in relation to the State (Grosfoguel and Georas 2000; Maira 2016). Moreover Afghans experience racialization as Muslims at home (Maghbouleh 2017; Maira 2016). For these reasons,

Afghan-Americans present multiple interlocking identities and social locations that may influence their integration/racialization and are worth studying.

Given their positionality on the matrix of domination (Collins 2000, 2016), it is important to study Afghan and other Muslim students who are racially classified as White in order to assess to what degree their classification fits within the proposed racial hierarchies of “Whites, honorary Whites and Black” presented by race scholars (Bonilla-Silva 2003). Afghans have features that range from red hair to black hair and brown eyes to green eyes. They are legally racialized as White, though their skin color can range from white to brown. Afghans range in socioeconomic status and level of human capital, with some refugees having more social and educational capital to start over in their host country (Takaki 2008). Though Afghans continue to be displaced to this day, the majority of Afghans came to the U.S. in two different waves: the first in the 1980s after the Soviet-Afghan war, and the latest since the Taliban’s takeover in the 2000s. Since then, some Afghans have returned only to be displaced again due to instability and poverty in the region (Crews 2016). With President Biden’s plan to retreat U.S. troops from Afghanistan, the country is once again on the brink of war with the Taliban, making the study of Afghan refugees and their imperial consciousness even more urgent. Taking a critical refugee studies perspective, my study reframes discourses on Afghan refugees from victims of trauma to understanding how they experience and respond to ongoing state forces that continue to racialize them. Despite ongoing war in Afghanistan, most studies on Afghan refugees continue to examine the first generation and discuss Afghans only in

psychological and social work lens that portray them as victims of trauma. In contrast, my study contributes new insights into the demographic and immigration related factors (such as wave of arrival, refugee status, racial classification, national origin, race, religion, parental education, class) as well as ongoing U.S. imperialism may shape integration and racialization of a “White” Muslim group (Lee and Skye 2016; Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Telles and Ortiz 2008).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the gaps in the literature above, this dissertation is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How does the racialization of Muslims manifest within institution of higher education? How does this racialization shape campus climate and civic engagement?
- 2) How do Muslims’ ethnonational, diasporic and refugee backgrounds shape their racialization? How does it shape racial identification

DATA AND METHODS

The State and University of California context.

State budget cuts have led to rising tuition costs and the privatization of public universities, making them less accessible during a time when increasing amounts of immigrants, first generation and students of color are attending (Chatterjee and Maira 2014). Research suggest that Muslims are one of the most educated immigrant groups

(Pew Research Center 2017), making immigration and education key sectors to explore the experiences of U.S. Muslims. Importantly, I focus my study on the California context, a state where children from immigrant families outnumber those from non-immigrant families and young people of color outnumber White youth (Terriquez 2015b). This context provides a theoretically unique state to study the intersections of inequality (religion, immigrant background class, and gender) across and within different racial groups. I aim to investigate whether the post-9/11 and current tumultuous political climate contribute to new understandings of the intersections of inequality that include religion.

University of California is an important site of study given its reputation as one of the largest premier public university systems in the country, and given its history of campus activism, as the UC system has hosted the Free Speech, Black Power, Ethnic Studies, Immigrant rights, and other student-led movements. At the same time, the UC system offers an important context to answer my research questions because of its increased privatization in recent years with rising tuition costs and active repression of student protests. The UCs have also been directly impacted by the War on Terror (Chatterjee and Maira 2014). Increased funding for the War on Terror militarization has resulted in drastic cuts from federal grants (Ravitch 2016). In sum, California's racial diversity combined with its plethora of public higher education research universities makes it an interesting case for study. Taking into account UC's higher costs and lower accessibility and capacity compared

to California State Universities and community colleges, it is important to study how it engages with its mission to fulfill diversity.

Every other year, the University of California administers an undergraduate experience survey to solicit student opinions on a broad range of undergraduate students' academic and co-curricular experiences, including instruction, advising, and student services. The system-wide biennial survey started in 2004, and campus climate questions started to be administered in 2010. This project draws on data from the 2016 UC-wide UCUES (UC Undergraduate Student Experience Survey). It also includes interviews with Muslim American students attending a UC campus.

ANALYSIS

This mixed methods study draws upon three data sources to better understand Afghan and Muslim racialization and integration: 1) 2016 University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey data (UCUES) (N=63,115), 90-in depth interviews with Muslims across the UC campuses, and 3) a participatory action research project. I conduct my data collection and analysis in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of the participatory action research project and quantitative analysis using STATA quantitative analysis tools to produce a general picture of the ways that Muslim and non-Muslim racialized students experience campus climate and civic engagement at the UC. Phase 2, qualitative interviews with Muslim students triangulates and answers related questions to the survey questionnaire to address limitations and provide a more in-depth account as to why particular patterns exist. I integrate these

data to produce important insights on campus racial climate across Muslim and non-Muslim racial groups.

Specifically, this project adopts a multilevel, sequential mixed methods design in which the survey analysis preceded the interview data collection and mixing occurs across multiple levels of analysis to answer related aspects of the same research question or related questions (Creswell and Clark 2011; Shoonenbeum and Johnson 2017; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 151). This process illuminated what further areas need to be explored and what questions need to be raised. In addition to elaborating on the survey findings and checking for triangulation, the semi-structured interviews answered a related set of questions regarding modes of civic engagement and how surveillance and racialization influence students' experiences of campus climate. Though quantitative analysis precedes qualitative, both are given equal status in this study, and at some points were occurring simultaneously.

Quantitative Survey Analysis

Survey database. First, to examine perceptions of campus climate and students' civic engagement I use data from the 2016 Undergraduate Student Experience Survey (UCUES). The UC-wide UCUES surveys all full-time undergraduate students across the nine UCs, thereby giving a representative sample for UC students across the State. The dataset does not reveal the particular UC in attendance due to confidentiality. The sample comprises 63,115 student participants, with 45,777 useable records of race or ethnicity. The present study focused on

sampling Muslim-identified students (n=1,065) in relation to their non-Muslim racialized peers (n=54,090). The UCUES employs a modular design in order to include a greater number of items without increasing the time it takes a student to complete the survey. The questionnaire contains a set of core questions administered to every respondent, as well as a UC common module. Core questions focused primarily on topics related to academic program review, demographics, use of time, and general satisfaction. The UC common module includes topics on student life and development, academic engagement, and civic engagement

Data Analysis. In analyzing UCUES data, I analyze racial and religious patterns in students' perceptions of campus climate and patterns of civic engagement. I examined their interest in campus civic engagement. My main variables identify Muslim religious affiliation and race. Other key variables included immigrant background, gender, and socioeconomic background. Previous studies have pointed to the importance of these variables (Harper and Hurtado 2007; Larson, Hansen, and Moneta 2006; Terriquez 2015b; Yosso et al. 2009). Control variables included the division from which the student is from (i.e. STEM/humanities/social sciences), transfer status, and proximity to campus.

Participatory Action Research and Semi-Structured Interviews

To provide the opportunity to share Muslim student voices, I draw on an in-depth case study of a photovoice participatory action research project conducted with Muslim women at one university, and 90 in-depth interviews with UC students across

nine campuses. Drawing on critical race theory, I center the voices and experiences of those at the margins to counter the Eurocentric epistemologies and knowledges as the only valid ones (Dixson and Rousseau 2005). Delgado Bernal (2002) argues that voices of students of color can subvert narratives that present dominant groups as naturally superior. Furthermore, storytelling and narratives have proved "instrumental in providing a voice for students who are otherwise not heard, thus allowing students to provide their own perspectives on their educational experiences" (Dixson and Rousseau 2005:11).

Photovoice. The photovoice participatory action research project relied on an intersectional framework that aimed to bring knowledge of social problems through the "knowledge learned through everyday experiences" of disenfranchised communities, while also serving as a tool for empowering communities and individuals (Collins 2002; Combahee River Collective 1983). Participatory action research (PAR) consists of a "cyclical process of fact-finding, action, reflection, leading to further inquiry and action for change" (Minkler 2000:191). Photovoice is a participatory action research method that serves as a tool for self-assessment and community empowerment by building the community's capacity for evaluation and research. My sample consisted of seven Muslim women, one Hijabi, two part-time Hijabis. Three self-identified as queer. Students ranged from second years to fourth years, and came from Sudanese/Black, Palestinian, Pakistani, White, Afghan, Persian, Filipina, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Latinx racial and ethnic backgrounds. I recruited participants by advertising the research opportunity to undergraduate advising lists

and ethnic resource centers. I also sought references from direct and indirect networks.

The project began by interpreting literature on Muslim American's campus climate experiences. After identifying a gap situated in the literature we came up with the research question, How does the campus and community context influence your sense of wellbeing as a Muslim student, to be answered through photos. After several rounds of collecting, interpreting and sharing photos, participants and I collaboratively coded over 100 photos using grounded theory methodology (Strauss and Corbin 1997). Results summarized in the preliminary findings section below.

Semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews provide a lens on the social mechanisms underlying perceptions of campus climate and patterns of civic engagement for racialized Muslim students. The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of topics ranging from demographics, migration/refugee background, experiences with discrimination, prior civic engagement, peer networks, interactions with other students, staff and faculty, perceptions of general and specific climate, and experiences with Islamophobia, and surveillance and perceived structural barriers to their positive campus climate perceptions or civic engagement experiences. The semi-structured interviews with Afghan-Americans address these topics in addition to their migration trajectory and refugee wave of arrival.

In order to get a wider range of experiences in regards to campus climate and civic engagement, I conducted interviews with study participants were recruited

through social media and advertisements at campus events and multicultural centers, participants ranged in years, but only a few freshmen were interviewed since they had just arrived to campus and did not have a firm grasp of its climate yet. Sharing a religious and in some cases ethnic identity with my subjects enabled me to build trust and activate my networks to recruit participants willing to share their experiences. A total of 90 Muslim students were interviewed from different ethnoracial backgrounds that included: African, African-American, Arab, Afghan, Latinx, South Asian, and Southeast Asian. Data includes interviews from 2015-2016 and 2019-2020. Men are a little underrepresented as are students from southern California. I used fellowship funds to incentivise student participation with a \$20 visa gift card.

Data Analysis. All interviews have been transcribed. I used my funds from my *Center for Comparative Immigration Studies* fellowship and the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement for transcription costs to expedite the analysis process for the in-depth interviews. Interviews were sent for transcription throughout data collection to rev.com. Data were analyzed through Dedoose, an online qualitative software with a combination of inductive and deductive coding methods to help illuminate emerging themes and, ultimately, provide answers to the research questions (Strauss and Corbin, 1997; Saldana, 2012). I worked with four undergraduate research assistants who identify as SWANA or a person of color to code the data. During the first round of coding I looked for broad patterns across interviews using structural coding that “applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research

question used to frame the interview” (84). Some initial codes that emerged with first round coding include: religiosity, administrator encounters, American assimilation/dissonance, racial encounters, depictions of Muslims, identity, migration, community, political activity, police, family, gender, privilege, fear, hypercriminalization, hijabi experiences, pride/shame, hypervigilance, lack of resources, isolation.

This method enabled me to create an index to quickly access data. Next, I analyzed transcripts using descriptive, in-vivo and analytical codes (Saldana, 2012) which I developed into thematic networks based on my explorations of textual references among basic themes related in conceptual content (Attride-Stirling, 2001). After sifting through and building organizing themes, I integrate these into quantitative analysis to help explain the social mechanisms that shape the survey and photovoice results.

RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

I pursued research because of my desire to catalyze change in social institutions and create more equitable social relations. Learning about research at the onset of my graduate career from the *Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California* (CCREC) introduced me to a method of doing research that was carefully constructed, thoughtful and rooted in critical pedagogy. This lens opened up the possibilities of conducting research *with* a study population rather than *on* them as a means to produce knowledge. In the context of research, some researchers describe

their experiences of being trained and participating in research as a process of “power and complicity” (Villenas 1996: 713). A process that is complicated and ridden with contradictions, as one learns how (if possible) to use the “master’s tools” for a different purpose than they have historically served (i.e. to oppress so many of our communities) (Lorde 2003). Anthropologist, Sofia Villenas (1996) suggests that researchers are implicated as colonizers in the research process when they define problems for the community and, “claim authenticity of interpretation and description under the guise of authority” (713).

Contending with this “authority of interpretation” is an ongoing point of reflection for me. As an Afghan-American growing up post 9/11, my colonized identity ranged from hypervisibility as “oppressed and terrorist” to invisibility to the point of erasure. It was at the 2015 *American Educational Research Association* conference when I realized my purpose in academia was tied to who I was and the community I came from, as the daughter and granddaughter of Afghan refugees. I had stumbled late into a random session at the conference and found a Vietnamese education scholar presenting narrative research on Vietnamese diasporic placemaking. Up until this point, I had never considered that examining my community’s experiences would be considered legitimate research. Thinking through research through my experiences with my own community forces me to live in the discomfort and the contradictions within the borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987), that make reflexivity possible (Pillow 2003; Torre & Ayala 2009).

It is the fear of misrepresentation, co-option and complicity with the colonizer that keeps me in the precariousness of ambivalence and the “reflexivity of discomfort” (Pillow 2003). It is the contradictory experiences of having experienced cultural oppression from within and outside the academy that motivate me to move through these fears and discomfort to engage with them directly. The discomfort of conducting research is something I contend with in all phases of the process, especially when it is not a participatory project and community members are not present for accountability. In these cases, it becomes even more vital to exercise reflexivity in order to make sure I am engaging in ethical research that does not misrepresent or further subjugate myself and my community.

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

The theoretical and empirical findings of this dissertation are organized in four chapters that can be read as standalone articles. In Chapter 2. Racial-Religious Decoupling in the University: I leverage UCUES surveys, photovoice entries and participant observation data to examine how anti-Muslim racism operates in university contexts by analyzing survey data and in-depth qualitative data (interviews, photovoice narratives, year-long participant observation). Drawing on critical race theory (CRT) that suggests racism is inherently systemic and intertwined with US higher education institutions, I argue that anti-Muslim racism becomes institutionalized through *racial-religious decoupling*. This racial schema overlooks the ways that race and religion intersect and are embedded with inequalities. Racial-

religious decoupling explains findings that suggest Muslims' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity can be attributed almost entirely to (dis) respect of their racial and religious backgrounds. Results have implications for how institutions of higher education approach anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion around the question of religion.

Then, in Chapter 3. Racial-Religion and Civic Engagement, I weigh in on sociological debates regarding the levels of civic participation of multiple marginalized groups. Drawing on large-scale undergraduate survey data, this chapter suggests that Muslims' faith and collective racialized-religious identities enhance their civic participation compared to other religious groups. While scholarship traditionally portrayed marginalized groups as disengaged, others have theorized how group identity threat may incite higher engagement levels. Nevertheless, few examine the extent to which marginalized religious groups also have higher levels of civic engagement. This study contributes an empirical account of a racialized-religious community's civic participation compared to other religious and nonreligious groups while accounting for complex religion (i.e., how religion is embedded with inequality). Findings extend group identity threat and complex religion theories to consider how a racialized-religious identity may produce different engagement patterns within and across religious communities.

Chapter 4, "Now I Always Say I'm Afghan:" Examining Anti-Muslim Ethnoracism through Refugee Racialized Hauntings argues for a conceptual

reframing of anti-Muslim racism to anti-Muslim ethnoracism to account for the particularities of the racialization processes of Muslims. Drawing on 43 semi-structured interviews with Afghan American refugees, I assert that ethnonational, diasporic, and refugee identities contribute to the racializing of Muslim Americans and shape how Muslims may respond and resist their racialization. Specifically, I describe the racialized hauntings, a combination of visible stereotypes and invisible effects of imperialism and refugee backgrounds, that shape Muslims' racialization experiences with regards to hyper(in)visibility, self-surveillance, and cultural survivance.

Finally, in Chapter 5. *Afghans Outside the Racial Box: Making Sense of Race and Citizenship*, I draw on theories of racial formation and cultural citizenship to examine interviews with 1.5- and second-generation Afghan Americans and how they experience racial liminality and belonging in an American racialized society. I argue that Afghans reject Whiteness and Middle Eastern North African (MENA) because it renders them illegible and reinforces imperial erasure and racial degradation (by not acknowledging their existence amidst ongoing violence in their homeland). I further argue that Afghans' racial proximity to Whiteness can sometimes hinder their coalitional politics, especially if they benefit from white privilege. These findings present the limitations of a MENA category to produce racial and political belonging, given its colonial roots and current conflations with Whiteness. Finally, these racial configurations have implications for understanding Muslims' complex nationalisms and belonging.

In Chapter 6, Conclusion I summarize the key contributions of this dissertation. I also discuss the limitations of this research and future analysis.

IMPLICATIONS

Ultimately, this study contributes an understanding of how anti-Muslim racism becomes institutionalized in a university setting to create unequal campus climate outcomes between Muslims and other religious groups while accounting for race through the concept, racial-religious decoupling. I contribute to studies of Muslim, immigrant and refugee racialization through the concept anti-Muslim ethnoracism and racialized hauntings. These concepts explain why Muslims have overall higher civic outcomes compared to other religious groups (to combat hostile campus climates) but within the community there are ethnoracial variations (anti-Muslim ethnoracism). This study makes several theoretical contributions to the literature. First, by analyzing the ways that Muslim Americans experiences differ within the community and from those of their non-Muslim same-race peers. Despite theories of Muslim racialization that suggest Islamophobia is a racial project (Cainkar and Selod 2018; Hussain 2017; Rana 2016), Muslim Americans' experiences with race have yet to be compared across different racial groups. This study provides empirical data to create a framework that accounts for the interactions between race and religion that manifest in anti-Muslim racism. Furthermore, this comparative race study contributes to the campus racial climate literature that currently separates the

experiences of Muslim students from their other racialized peers and studies race and religion as distinct variables among this community.

Second, I contribute to the sociology of higher education literature by introducing theories of racialized religion to higher education contexts. Currently, racialization theories suggest that racial projects organize subjects within the racialized social systems in which differential life outcomes are associated with different placements within the racial hierarchy with Whites on top followed by honorary Whites and those characterized as Black (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Omi and Winant 2014). Campus racial climate scholarship and critical race theory argues that the overt and covert forms of racism that these students experience through institutional and interpersonal means creates uneven academic and social terrains (Solarzano and Yosso 2005; Hurtado et al. 2017; Garcia 2017). I bring racialization theories to these discussions to contribute insights as to how Muslim students are placed within these racialized social hierarchies of the university.

Third, this study provides new insights into Afghan and Muslim students' civic and political engagement. As such, my study adds nuance to research that views college campuses as key sites of resistance (Maira 2016; Solarzano et al. 2000; Yosso et al. 2009) as well as sites of surveillance and repression (Chatterjee and Maira 2014; Falcon et al. 2014; Godrej 2014) .

Fourth, my study seeks to nuance theories of immigrant/refugee and Muslim racialization (Telles and Ortiz 2008; Massey and Sanchez 2010; Rana 2007; Espiritu

2004) by looking at the ways that race and religion may intersect to racialize Afghan-Americans who are legally considered White. Theories of immigrant integration emphasize how different immigrant groups experience race, but they often perceive religion as a symbolic boundary that will eventually dissipate over generations. My study of Afghans tests to what extent religion serves as a bright boundary in the groups' integration. I show how a particular refugee community, who have been previously linked to U.S. imperial interests, experiences racialization along different demographic factors such as religion in addition to national origin, gender, race, ethnicity and wave of arrival to influence their educational and civic engagement trajectories.

Importantly, my study contains policy implications for students who continue to experience racism within California institutions of higher learning. Findings from this study will be used to propose ways that these higher institutions can create welcoming environments and support student civic engagement despite national political climates that negatively target immigrants, Muslims, and other marginalized communities.

CHAPTER 2

RACIAL-RELIGIOUS DECOUPLING IN THE UNIVERSITY: INVESTIGATING RELIGIOUS STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Abstract. This mixed-methods study examines how anti-Muslim racism operates in university contexts by analyzing survey data and in-depth qualitative data (interviews, photovoice narratives, year-long participant observation). Islamophobia has been mainly researched on an interpersonal or global scale; however, notably missing are the ways that anti-Muslim racism becomes institutionalized. Drawing on critical race theory (CRT) that suggests racism is inherently systemic and intertwined with US higher education institutions, I argue that anti-Muslim racism becomes institutionalized through *racial-religious decoupling*. This racial schema overlooks the ways that race and religion intersect and are embedded with inequalities. Racial-religious decoupling explains findings that suggest Muslims' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity can be attributed almost entirely to (dis) respect of their racial and religious backgrounds. Results have implications for how institutions of higher education approach anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion around the question of religion.

For many years hate crimes against Muslims have sparked debate among sociologists on whether religious discrimination and Islamophobia can be termed racist. Islamophobia commonly refers to hostility and unfair discrimination against Muslims and communities (Elahi and Khan, 2018, p.6). After the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent intensification of the War on Terror, many scholars began to articulate the ways that Islamophobia intertwined with racism beyond religious discrimination (Elahi and Khan, 2018; Cainkar and Selod 2018; Love 2017). More recently, scholars have begun to adopt "anti-Muslim racism" as the term to describe how Muslims experience racialization as a religious group (Cainkar and Selod, 2018). Anti-Muslim racism refers to the ways that religion has taken on racial meaning in the wake of post-9/11 targeting of Muslim Americans (Garner and Selod, 2014) and has simultaneously been entangled and intertwined with race before the War on Terror due to US imperialism and European Orientalism (Goldberg, 2006; Husain, 2017; Rana, 2007; Said, 1979). As hate crimes against Muslims increase across the US and the globe, they have also increased in educational settings.

Scholars increasingly document how Muslim youth and students experience prejudice and microaggressions for their Muslim identities (Ali, 2014; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006). These studies find that young Muslims have to contend with gendered stereotypes of being considered too radical, or oppressed, and foreign while receiving little support from institutional agents (Abu El-Haj, 2010; Nasir and Al-Amin, 2010). Yet, among these studies, few examine more covert mechanisms of anti-Muslim racism that become institutionalized through university

norms and practices and ideologies (Abu El-Haj, 2010; Jaffa-Walter, 2013). Instead, most focus on blatant forms of interpersonal racism.

The purpose of this study was to examine how and to what extent these overt and covert racial mechanisms may shape Muslims' experiences with institutional diversity climates. In the quantitative phase of the study, I test a specific model in which respect for race and religion serve as potential mediators in the relationship between religious affiliation and perceptions of the university's institutional commitment to diversity. In the qualitative phase of the study, I demonstrate why respect for race and religion may be lower for Muslims in relation to the university as an institution. I propose *racial-religious decoupling* as a conceptual framework that explains how institutional practices and norms of racialized organizations also inhibit the agency of racialized-religious groups, who may also be students of color. Racial-religious decoupling also reveals the racial mechanisms by which anti-Muslim racism may become institutionalized, informing anti-racist equity initiatives. I argue that racial-religious decoupling explains why respect for race and respect for religion mediate institutional commitments to diversity because normative university practices and resource allocation limit Muslim students' agency and reinforce their racialization as cultural Outsiders. Implications suggest that the inclusion of Muslims into diversity is not enough, but rather what is needed is a more robust anti-racist institutional politic and culture that interrogates power and privilege at various intersections.

THE RACIALIZATION OF MUSLIMS

Anti-Muslim racism seeks to interrogate the interactions and interlocking nature of race and religion operating on a global and domestic level (Opratko, 2017; Razack, 2008). It manifests in state policies, discourse, and imperialism; it can become institutionalized through discriminatory practices; and, it can produce epistemological and physical violence against Muslims and Muslim-perceived individuals. Historically, Europe and the West have always defined themselves as separate and superior to Islam and the East based on religion and anti-blackness to justify domination (Said, 1978; Rana, 2007). After 9/11, this rhetoric of cultural superiority in the form of race and religion emerged to justify US intervention abroad and domestic surveillance policies in the US. In fact, after 9/11, the FBI recorded 28 ethnicities it wished to surveil for potential terrorist activities (Ali, 2016; Cainkar and Selod, 2018). Drawing on national surveys, Kaplan (2006) finds that the majority of Islamophobic crimes were racially motivated (44.9%), and biases were based on ethnicity (21.6%), religious (18.8%), and sexual orientation (14.35%) were pervasive (p.15). In their study with 222 UK Muslims, Sheridan (2006) found highly significant increases in both implicit and overt negative experiences based on race and religion. These studies suggest that Muslims' experiences with discrimination primarily center on racial logic based on the perceptions of the religion instead of actual religious beliefs or practices.

Scholars have found that cultural markers such as religious or cultural garb, Muslim-sounding names, and “images of a certain ‘swarthy’ phenotype (brown skin, Black hair, chiseled facial features)” (Rana 2011, p.5) and language have become racialized

or made to connote race by associating these characteristics with terrorism (Ali, 2016; Selod, 2016; Selod & Embrick, 2013; Naber, 2006; Selod & Garner, 2014; Rana, 2007; Sheth, 2016, Selod, 2015). For Muslim women in these communities, the hijab (veil) is the most notable target for being harassed, subjected to violence, and perceived as dangerous because of her assumed kinship to Osama bin Laden (Razack, 2008; Selod & Cainkar, 2018). In a recent study of the San Diego school district, 55% of students reported experiencing bullying because of their religious identity, and 29% of girls who wore hijab were targeted (McCollum, 2017). Furthermore, Cainkar and Selod (2018) argue that the “hijab, a religious signifier worn by Muslim women, ascribes certain characteristics to those who wear it, regardless of skin tone, resulting in racial encounters and experiences” (Cainkar, 2009; Perry, 2014; Selod, 2015). For example, f White Muslim women lose racial privilege when wearing the hijab and are considered less beautiful (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Galonnier, 2015; Moosavi, 2014). Additionally, the Runnymede report based in the UK reports that many Hijabis were outright fired from their jobs. Others were banned from wearing the covering in parts of Canada and completely in France (Kalif, 2008; Naber, 2008; Razack, 2008). Yet, among these studies, few examine the covert ways in which Muslims experience racism through institutional contexts and practices.

ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM IN EDUCATION

While many studies examine anti-Muslim racism in K-12, few examine Muslim experiences with racism in higher education. Higher education studies on

Muslim students suggest that Muslims experience blatant forms of racism such as race and gendered labels as foreign, terrorist, oppressed, and backward (Ali, 2014). Being perceived in this way creates anxiety for students and has implications for student success and mental and physical health problems (Nadal et al., 2012). Among Muslims, there are significant gender differences. Women who wear the hijab are at additional risks for experiencing harassment, instances of marginalization, prejudice, and discomfort due to the hypervisibility/physical embodiment of their religion (Seggie, Nevra, and Sanford, 2010). Non-visible Muslims also feel vulnerable due to stereotype threats or the fear of being judged by stereotypes related to their social identity (Steele, 1998; Nasir and Al-Amin, 2006).

Although Muslims perform academically similar to other religious groups such as Christians and Jews, they are less satisfied with their educational experiences than these groups (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Nasir and Al-Amin, 2006). Muslim students' dissatisfaction may be due to the burden of representation these individuals feel due to continually managing impressions with their professors and peers (Ali, 2014; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Sirin & Fine, 2008). It may also result from structural conditions that sustain and perpetuate White and Christian normativity (Bowman & Smedley, 2013). However, few studies examine how anti-Muslim racism manifests structurally or institutionally in higher education contexts through a race perspective.

CAMPUS RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS CLIMATES

The theory of racialized organizations, like critical race theory (CRT), contributes a framework that enables us to move beyond whether or not organizations are race-neutral to asking how racialized processes develop and operate within the context of an organization (Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Ray, 2019; Sewell, 1992). Ray (2019) defines racialized organizations as "meso-level social structures that limit the personal agency and collective efficacy of subordinate racial groups while magnifying the agency of the dominant racial group" (p. 36). Racialized structures affect the ways people feel they can move within the institution. Ray argues, "The ability to act upon the world, to create, to learn, to express emotion—indeed, one's full humanity—is constrained (or enabled) by racialized organizations" (p.36). Racialized organizations limit or enhance the agency of particular groups through the allocation of resources and legitimizing unequal access to them.

Empirical studies of CRT study higher education contexts focus on how institutions perpetuate racial inequality through color blindness, select admissions policies, and campus racial climates (Harper, 2012; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2007; Feagin, 2013; Solorzano, Ceja and Yosso, 2000). For example, Iverson (2007) examines diversity policies at 20 US universities and finds that university discourses constructed people of color as outsiders, "at-risk victims, commodities, and change agents that situate them as dependent on the university for success in higher education" (p.586). These discourses uphold Whiteness as the norm toward which "Other" students should aspire. While critical race theory centers race in its analysis, it also takes into account

other forms of domination that are co-constituted with race, such as class, and sexuality, that contribute to unequal life outcomes (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2007; Crenshaw, 1990; Harper, 2012; Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998). These studies find that gendered racism creates differential outcomes for women of color and men of color who may be pushed out of educational systems earlier on in their educational trajectories (Cammarota, 2004; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano and Villalpando, 1998).

Despite CRTs proclivity towards intersectional analyses, few scholars have adopted critical race theory to examine the intersections between race and religion in higher education contexts, despite the ways that universities are historically and predominantly Christian and Protestant organizations in the US (Bowman & Smedley, 2013; Mayrl & Oeur, 2009). Like race, religion may also play a role in the ways that universities subordinate non-dominant groups while privileging Christian values and norms (Bowman & Smedley, 2013). This has additional implications for non-dominant religious groups, such as Muslim Americans, who may also be experiencing racism within higher education institutions based on their racial and racialized religious identities. To address this gap, I examine how respect for race and respect for religion, proxies for campus racial and religious climates shape student's perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The mixed-methods design in this paper enables an understanding of the broader patterns shaping religious students' perceptions of institutional commitments to diversity and the extent to which respect for race and religion explain these ratings. It also attempts to counter dominant discourses about students of color as damaged and deficient and instead locates fault in the structures that devalue the knowledge and experiences of students of color (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). For this reason, in the quantitative analysis of this paper, I analyze religious students' perceptions and evaluations of institutional commitments to diversity as a means of shifting the gaze to institution inadequacies and the factors that mediate it.

The purpose of the qualitative strand is to center the voices and experiences of those at the margins to counter the Eurocentric epistemologies and knowledge as the only valid ways of thinking (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Delgado Bernal (2002) argues that voices of students of color can subvert narratives that present dominant groups as naturally superior. To center Muslim student voices, I draw on an in-depth case study of a photovoice participatory action research project I conducted with a purposeful sample of Muslim women at one university. The case study includes year-long participant observation, photovoice narratives, individual and group interviews. Based on prior studies of anti-Muslim racism and campus racial, religious climates, I hypothesize that Muslims will experience negative campus racial and religious climates because of their racialized religious identities and White normative secular-Christian norms of higher education institutions.

QUANTITATIVE STRAND

Participants (demographics).

Among the full sample, most UC students identified as White (25%), Latinx (25%), and Asian (23%). Asians disaggregated by ethnicity/region included: Southeast Asians (8%), Filipino/Pacific Islanders (5%), South Asians (5%), and East Asians (5%). Black/African Americans made up four percent of respondents and Native Americans/Alaskans about one percent. Students who marked some other race were about three percent of the full sample. About sixty percent of respondents were women, and a little less than half were first-generation college students (44%). Table 2.1. describes the survey sample. The left column presents descriptive statistics for the full sample the right columns present information about the Muslim subsample, disaggregated by race. Most students identify as nonreligious (43%), followed by Christian (33%) and spiritual /other religion (13%). Muslims and other non-dominant religious groups such as Jews and Hindus make up two percent of the full sample, while Buddhists/Taoists make up five percent and Sikhs about one percent.

Among Muslim students, most identified as MENA/White (44%) and South Asian (29%), followed by a minority of Southeast Asian (13%), Black/African (8%), and Other non-White races (7%). Southeast Asian and Other non-White Muslim students are more likely to be international students (13% and 14%, respectively). Across racial groups, the majority of Muslims identified as either the children of immigrants (2nd generation) or came to the US under the age of 17 (1.5

generation) (76%-90%). Like the full sample, the majority of Muslim respondents were women. Black and Southeast Asian Muslim students (47% and 40%) have a higher percentage of first-generation college students than MENA and South Asian Muslims (33-36%).

Data source.

Quantitative data for this study comprises the 2016 Undergraduate Student Experience Survey (UCUES) (N=63,115) employed online through a modular design that contained questions related to academic program review, demographics, campus climate, use of time, general satisfaction, student life and development, academic engagement, and civic engagement. The 2016 University of California (UC) UCUES surveys over 190,000 undergraduates at UC's nine undergraduate campuses. The 2016 UCUES dataset provided for this study did not include identifying information on individual students' UC campus affiliation to ensure participant confidentiality. The 2016 database contains 63,115 final respondents, contributing to an overall response rate of 33%, based on a total of 191,095 invited undergraduates to participate in the survey (IRAP, 2018). This study draws on a sample size of 39,244, 62% of total respondents, and excludes individuals who failed to answer questions on campus climate regarding respect for race, religion, and perceptions of institutional commitments, religious affiliation, race, gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant background, international student status, off-campus living, and time spent on spirituality. Despite excluding 38% of the survey sample, the analysis relies on a

subsample of respondents who generally reflect gender, ethnicity, applicant status, and student level of all University of California students (IRAP, 2018).

Measures

Institutional Commitment to Campus Climate. This composite factor was created to assess students' perceptions of meso-level commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion ($\alpha=.800$). It is comprised of four indicators: 1) this campus values diversity, 2) Channels for expressing discrimination or harassment complaints are readily available to students at UC [CAMPUS], 3) Top campus administrators are genuinely committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences at UC [CAMPUS], and 4) Faculty are genuinely committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences at UC [CAMPUS]. Prior studies identify institutional commitment as a vital dimension of *enacting* campus climate overall (Hurtado, 2007; Strauss & Volkwin, 2004; Nora & Cabrera, 1993). Organizational scholars suggest that students' perceptions of institutional commitment can be shaped by “(a) congruence between an individual's values and goals and those of the institution (affinity of values) or the normative component, (b) certainty in the choice of institution, (c) loyalty to the institution, and (d) a sense of belonging or maintaining membership in the institution” (Nora and Cabrera 1994, p.245).

Religion. Twenty-seven religions were coded into the following seven distinct categories: Muslim, Spiritual/other religion, Buddhist/Taoist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and all Christians. Students who reported no religious preference, "not

particularly spiritual or religious," agnostic, and atheists were included in a nonreligious category.

Respect for Race/Ethnicity & Respect for Religion. These two indicators are based on the questions: "Students of my race and ethnic background are respected on this campus," and "Students of my religious background are respected on this campus." Both indicators were measured on a six-point scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Anti-Muslim racism argues that Muslims' experiences with prejudice and discrimination move beyond religious beliefs to racial experiences that mark their bodies, culture, nationalities, and attributes as foreign, deficient, and associated with violence (Garner & Selod, 2015). As a result, Muslim students may rate feelings of respect for religion and race /ethnicity lower than other religious groups, as prior studies have found (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010). Prior studies have used these questions as proxies for understanding prejudice against race/ethnicity and religion (Cabrera, 1994).

Race and Ethnicity. Following the Census and UC operationalization of race, seven racial categories were created: Native American/Alaskan; African/Black/Caribbean; Latinx (Mexican American, Latino/Other Spanish American); East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean); Filipino/Pacific Islander (Pacific Islanders were included in this group because there were minimal cases); South Asian (East Indian/Pakistani); Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Cambodian, Thai/Other Asian); Other races (some students marked others and fill in the blank

with another race); White/Middle Eastern North African (MENA): The white designation, unfortunately, could not be disaggregated and includes people from European, as well as, Middle Eastern, West Asian, and North African backgrounds. For each of the above, only one group includes "Hispanics": Latinx. Multiracial students were automatically sorted into the group with the lowest number of students as determined by the UC application.

Other student characteristics that shape campus climate are controlled in the analysis: including the general area of study (i.e., STEM/humanities/social sciences), GPA, transfer status, class level, and residential area (on/off-campus, international students, a first-generation college student (Rennick, Smedley, Wallace and Kim, 2013; Quaye, John & Harper, 2014).

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics. I began analysis with Pearson's correlations and chi-square analysis to understand the relationships among key variables. The dependent variable institutional climate is positively correlated with respect for race (.4267, $p < .0001$) and respect for religion (.3302, $p < .0001$). Respect for race and respect for religion are also positively correlated (.5169). Among religious groups, Muslim students rated religious campus climate significantly lower than most of their religious peers. Just 63% of students agreed, strongly agreed, or somewhat agreed that "students with my religious beliefs are respected on campus" compared to 84% of Christian students, 87% of spiritual students, and 90% of nonreligious students.

See Figure 1 below. Only Jewish students rated religious campus climate lower (58% agreement).

Fig. 2.1. Proportion of Religious Students Who Agree with the Statement: “Students of my religious beliefs are respected on campus.”

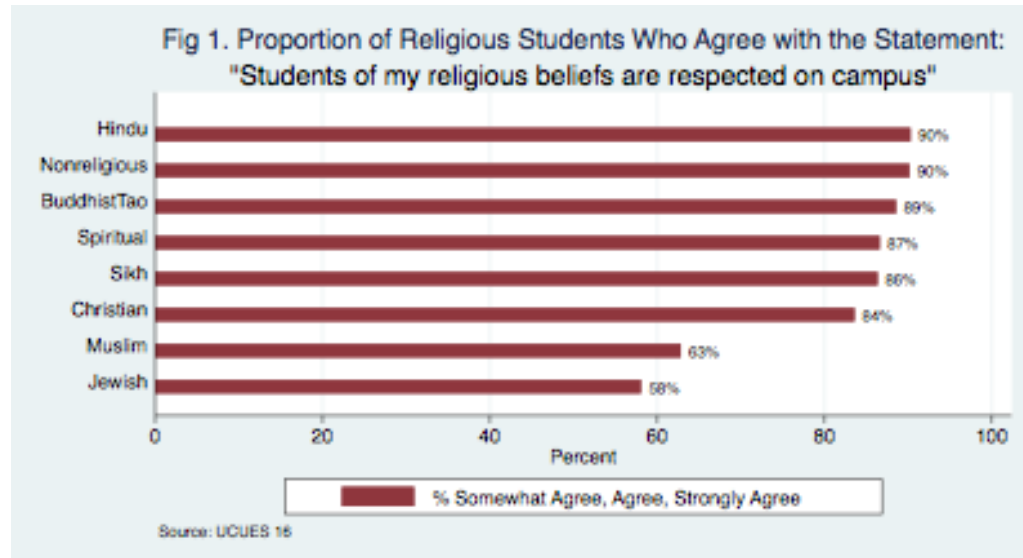
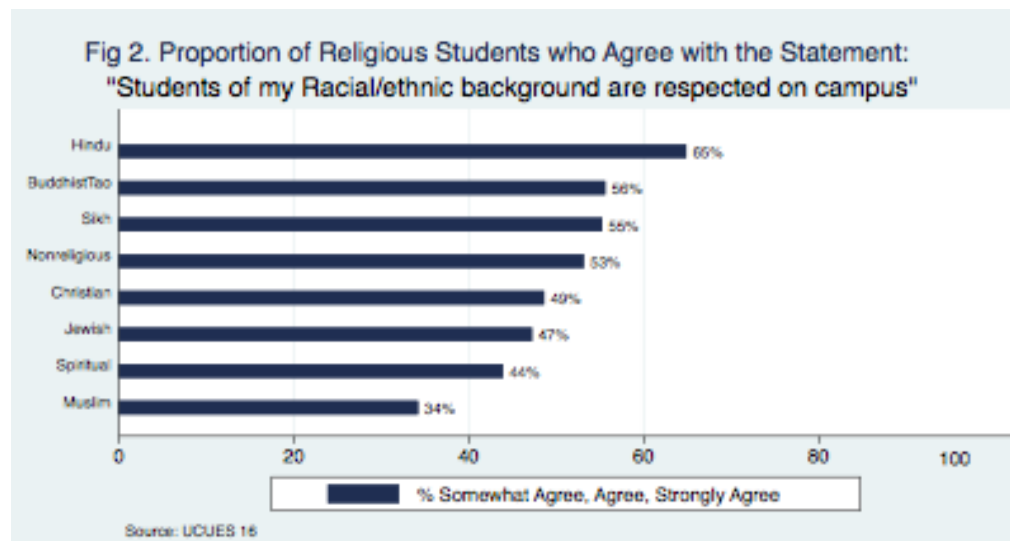


Figure 2.2. Proportion of Religious Students Who Agree with the Statement: “Students of my Racial/Ethnic background are respected on campus.”



Muslim students were also significantly more likely to rate racial campus climate lower than all other religious groups. In Figure 2 above, Muslim students were significantly less likely to agree that their racial/ethnic background was respected on campus (34%) compared to their spiritual (44%), Jewish (47%), and nonreligious peers (53%).

These findings may be a result of the racial heterogeneity of the Muslim student community. Research on campus racial climates suggests that students of color rate campus climates lower than their White peers (Harper & Hurtado 2007). Next, I created three models to understand how accounting for respect for race and respect for religion shaped perceptions of institutional commitments to positive campus climates. Because respect for race and respect for religion were both significantly correlated (.51), I added each one separately to regression models to avoid errors produced by multicollinearity.

Results

Regression Analysis. The baseline model (Model 1) in Table 2.1 assesses institutional commitment to diversity for racial and religious groups. It reveals that while accounting for student characteristics such as major, first-generation college student, transfer student, on-campus housing, etc. and religion, Black students have significantly lower ratings of institutional commitment (-.85, $p < .0001$) compared to Whites, followed by East Asians, (-.40), Filipinos, (-.36), Southeast Asians, (-.35) other race, south Asians, and Latinx students. Among religious groups, while

accounting for race, all but Buddhist/Taoists had significantly lower institutional ratings than Christians. The most negative perceptions of institutional commitment came from Jewish students. ($-.412, p<.001$) followed by Muslims ($-.389, p<.0001$), Hindu ($-.346, p<.01$), followed by spiritual, nonreligious, Sikh-identifying students. First-generation college student status was not a significant factor in shaping institutional commitment to campus climate, though a higher income was slightly more likely to result in positive ratings. Coming from an immigrant background significantly increased the likelihood of a lower institutional commitment rating ($-.107$), as did identifying as a non-binary gender ($-1.516, p<.001$) or identifying as a woman ($-.102, p<.0001$). To check for multicollinearity, I ran a vif test and found that the mean vif was less than four with an average of 1.61, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a critical concern in this baseline model.

My second model adds in perceptions of racial respect, which results in a significantly $p<.0001$ higher likelihood of rating institutional commitment to diversity positively. Adding this predictor significantly increased the R-squared from explaining about 4% of the variance in the baseline model to about 20%; this is likely because respect for race had a strong coefficient ($.726, p<.0001$). While accounting for racial respect, all religions were still likely to rate campus diversity climates lower than Christians, except for Muslims. Hindu students were most likely to rate institutional commitment to diversity lower ($-.298, p<.01$), followed by nonreligious students, Jewish students ($-.197, p<.0001$), and Spiritual and Sikh students. Adding respect for race into the model made "Muslim" an unreliable predictor of institutional

commitment to diverse climates. Similarly, accounting for respect for race shifted African/Black/ Caribbean students' ratings from significantly and strongly negative (.845, $p < .001$) to non-significant (-.028). Accounting for respect for race significantly predicted positive ratings among Latinx students (.242, $p < .0001$), however, it still yielded significantly negative ratings from Southeast, East Asians, and Pacific islanders. Women and gender-queer students (non-binary) rated campus diversity climate significantly lower compared to men. Notably, income and immigrant background were non-significant predictors for institutional commitment.

Model 3 accounts for the relationship between students rating on perceptions of religious respect and institutional commitments to diversity. While other religious groups continued to rate institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians, for Muslims and Jews, accounting for respected religion, made their religious identities unreliable predictors. Among racial-ethnic groups, respect for religion does not mitigate the negative relationship between ABC, Asian, and other race students with significantly negative ratings of campus commitment to diversity. Income was a non-significant predictor, and immigrant background was significantly correlated with negative institutional commitment ratings (-.098, $p < .001$). See Table 2.2.

The vif test for each model suggested that multicollinearity was not a problem. To account for the significant heteroskedasticity scores, I ran each model indicating robust standard errors to provide more accurate error and significance

testing results. Significant results remained the same. Robust standard error and significance results are presented in Models 1-3.

Additional Analysis: Mediation. Both respect for race and respect for religion emerged as strong predictors of institutional commitment to diversity, suggesting a possible mediation effect between religious students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity. Recall that identifying as Muslim is a reliable predictor in Model 1 (Table 2.2.) but—after we account for variation in either respect for race (Model 2) or respect for religion (Model 3), Muslim becomes an unreliable predictor, suggesting that that respect for one's race or religion accounts for nearly all of the association between the outcome and identifying as Muslim. First, I ran four separate regressions as proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) to test each relationship; then, I confirmed my findings with Hicks, Raymond, and Dustin Tingley's (2011) STATA package for causal mediation analysis (medeff).

In the first regression model, religion (Muslim, Christian) was entered as a predictor of perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity. It was found to be significant, $\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$, with the t-test for institutional commitment = 4.92, $p < 0.001$. In the second model, religion (Muslim, Christian) was entered as a predictor for perceptions of respect; Christian's religious identities were significantly related to higher ratings of respect for race compared to Muslims, $\beta = 0.40$, with the t-test = 9.32, $p < .0001$. The third model showed a significant relationship between respect for race and perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity, $\beta = 0.72$, $t=91.31$,

$p < .0001$, and finally, when entering both predictors into the regression, institutional commitment to diversity was predicted significantly by respect for race $\beta = 0.777$, $t = 61.16$, $p < .0001$, and religious identity (Christian or Muslims) became an unreliable non-significant predictor ($\beta = .049$, $t = .75$). I did the same regression steps for respect for religion as the mediator. Table 2.3. shows results from the STATA mediation analysis. Results demonstrate that full mediation was met: Respect for race can explain 92% of why Muslim students rated institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians. At the same time, respect for religion also explains 98% of why Muslim students rate institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians. To further understand how (dis)respect for race and religion occurs on university campuses in relation to the institution, I draw on data from a case study of a photovoice participatory action research project led by students collaboratively with the researcher at one university from the UCUES dataset.

QUALITATIVE STRAND

In this section, I identify patterns across the qualitative data to answer why Muslim students rate institutional commitments lower than other religious groups and how it relates to their perceived respect for their racial and religious identities. It is important to contextualize quantitative findings through students' voices to center how they speak back to power in these circumstances instead of simply depicting their oppression. Anti-Muslim racism manifests through the following racial mechanisms: 1) restricting Muslim agency and access to cultural and social resources,

and 2) reinforcing Muslims' otherness when they point out institutional deficiencies to discourage them from advocating for themselves.

Participants & Site

To amplify the voices of the most marginalized students, I utilized purposeful snowball sampling methods to recruit students from different racial, ethnic, sexual orientations, and gender marginalized backgrounds that identified religiously or culturally as Muslim yet may have been marginal to the broader Muslim Student Association community. Table 2.4. below shows the participants and their demographic information. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Students were selected from one public research university from nine campuses in the survey database. The university enrolls about 18,000 undergraduate students comprised of three main racial groups: European American (30 percent), Asian (28 percent), and Chicanx/Latinx (27 percent), in addition to a small percentage of African American/Black and Caribbean students (4 percent) (Office of Diversity Equity & Inclusion 2016). The university's federal designation as a "Hispanic Serving Institution" belies the great deal of work still needed to ensure students' retention and success in different marginalized communities. The town surrounding the campus is 84 percent White, and the rest are mostly Hispanic/Latinx (CCS, 2014). The town offers a variety of Christian churches, but only one synagogue and no mosque. At the time of this project, the university provided no prayer space or designated reflection room for any religious faith.

Data and Method

This paper draws data from a year-long participatory action research project that includes 55 photovoice narratives, ten months of participant observations, and iterative focus group interviews with the eight participants. We chose photovoice as our favored participatory action research method because of the power of photographs and written narratives to communicate lasting stories. The photovoice research project emerged as an actionable strategy for change to address the gap between the "institution's deeds and words" (Ahmed, 2017,p. 107). We aimed to document the strengths and concerns of the community, move away from the deficit-oriented methods and frameworks, and produce research addressing institutional shortcomings.

Data Analysis

Adopting an empowerment evaluation approach (Langhout & Fernandez, 2014), students were trained and engaged in various aspects of the research process, including coding, analyzing the data, and shaping the research questions to make school reform more accessible by those in marginal positionalities (Agarwal et al., 2015; Clay, 2019; Langhout & Fernandez, 2014). Study participants collaboratively constructed the research question: how do your campus and community shape your sense of wellbeing as a Muslim student? Together they brainstormed a project to embody shared values and goals and decided on photovoice as an action research method that prompts individuals to take photos based on a question they have

regarding their community (Langhout & Fernandez, 2014). Each week the group would take photographs of their everyday experiences related to the research question. From there, the team selected a few photos to discuss and write about each week. The following week, we would come together and share our photos, experiences and brainstorm solutions to any challenges experienced by students. After five months, the group documented and analyzed over 100 photographs and participated in ten focus groups. In the year that this project took place, I conducted participant observations that included informal interviews with students and staff, accompanying and participating in student events, advocating on behalf of the community with administrators, and different undergraduate student organization meetings. I coded the participant observation and additional data using a grounded theory approach of thematic and in vivo codes to identify broader patterns across narratives (Saldana, 2009).

Findings: Hyper(in)visible Muslims Navigating a Racialized Organization

In the section below, I present some examples of why respect for race and ethnicity and respect for religion play a role in Muslim students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diverse campus climate. Anti-Muslim racism manifests through the following racial mechanisms: 1) restricting Muslim agency and access to cultural and social resources, and 2) reinforcing Muslims' otherness when they point out institutional deficiencies to discourage them from advocating for themselves.

For example, while planning a protest for the Women's Day March, Mina shares how she and her Muslim friend's political organizing was limited due to not having a cultural or religious resource center for students from their background that could sponsor their efforts. Mina, second year, a light-skinned Afghan hijabi, wrote:

“Self Advocacy”

This image [Image 1. student creating a protest banner] portrays how hard it is for Muslim students and many other marginalized groups to be heard on campus. In preparing for the Women's March that my friend Wasma planned and I co-organized, we had very little help in other organizations coming out and supporting. One problem with this campus is that there are no SWANA institutions- by this, I mean that there is no "Middle Eastern North African" resource center for students... it is often hard for SWANA students to get funding for different events that they can organize.

This excerpt offers a glimpse into how respect for race and ethnicity can be tied to institutional resources. Muslim women's racial invisibility constrains their ability to access resources, moving them to be at the front lines of advocacy work for multiple communities. While Whiteness is privileged throughout the university, Muslim "White" students, who are South West Asian, North African, or SWANA, experience "limits on their Whiteness" (Maghbouleh, 2017). Their imposed Whiteness makes it difficult for them to seek institutional resources despite being racialized as "brown" non-Americans and foreigners due to their racial and religious identities (Maghbouleh, 2017; Selod, 2018). Some universities have MENA or SWANA "cultural" or retention centers to support the majority of their Muslim student communities since administrators like to cite legal restrictions (separation of church and state) that restrict them from providing overt funding for student religious groups

(Personal communication, 5.28.18). With no space or office to seek resources or belonging, most Muslim students created their own community spaces and access to resources to sustain their different organizing strategies, thus creating the sentiment that the campus does not commit to respecting their race or religious backgrounds.

While Muslim students may be invisible on campus based on their racial and religious identities, the larger sociopolitical climate hypervisibilizes them, creating hyper-invisibility. After the brutal murder of three Black Muslims, Saliha, a Black Sudanese Muslim student on campus, organized a vigil to honor the victims because she said, "this hit way too close to home as a Sudanese American myself. I fear for my father, my brothers, and all the men and women in my family that could fall as victims of these horrendous crimes." Black students come from diverse backgrounds and can have immigrant or non-immigrant backgrounds and different religious identities. Black Muslim students experience multiple axes of domination at once that are overlooked by a White normative Christian institution. Planning these events are community acts of resistance that make the sociopolitical visible in the realm of the university. Gizem, a gender-queer Latinx Muslim student, also attended this event and remarked:

"Vigil for #OurThreeBrothers: Challenging Anti-blackness"

There have been so many Islamophobic "incidents" both on and off-campus. However, there is always a lack of acknowledgment and support from the university community. It takes a mental toll on people to continually have to deal with violence and advocate for their communities because they know nobody else will. We often see students advocating for themselves, especially when the institution disregards their pain...Black Muslims had been murdered,

yet there was a lack of outcry from either the non-Muslim community or the Muslim community, and it was due to both Islamophobia and anti-Blackness.

These excerpts reveal how race and religion are intertwined in everyday encounters and yet overlooked by institutions discursively and materially. This creates perceptions of inequitable campus commitment to diversity and lack of racial and religious respect, especially for POC Muslims who do not have the privilege to pass as white or identify with more dominant Muslim groups (Arabs and South Asians). It also demonstrates how anti-Muslim racism, a global racial project permeates the bounds of universities and becomes reinforced when institutions do not do anything to counter the ideologies and practices that sustain it actively. Muslims intersectional identities show that even if Muslims were included in the diversity and inclusion initiatives, 1) without addressing anti-blackness, intersecting forms of institutionalized racism, and broader sociopolitical contexts that fuel anti-Muslim racism, then Muslim students would continue to be subjected to violence.

Though Saliha experiences hypervisibility as a Black person in the US and at a historically White university, she also felt invisibility as Muslim because she didn't wear the hijab. This invisibility made it difficult for her to feel belonging in either the Black or Muslim community and even shaped her ability to work during Ramadan. For instance, her supervisor dismissed her request to provide meal accommodations for Ramadan, not comprehending that she was a practicing Muslim. Saliha stated, "It makes you feel like you're the deficient one when you ask for resources; like you are less than." Her remarks point to the racial mechanisms of the racialized organization

that have a legacy of sustaining White and Christian-secular normativity by constructing "Others" and any of their "additional" needs as foreign, radical, and excessive. Being a minority student in terms of race, ethnicity, and religion on campus, Saliha consistently battled implicit and explicit everyday racism (Smith, Yosso, and Solorzano, 2011). As a non-visible Muslim woman, Saliha had to navigate racial, religious, and gendered assumptions about what a Muslim woman should look like. As she navigated predominately White spaces on campus as a woman of color, she felt the burden of continually asking the university to provide resources, revealing how the university is structured to privilege White and Christian values and male voices (Bowman & Smedley, 2013). This instance shows how Anti-Muslim racism manifests through institutional deficiencies that fail to provide resources for racialized Muslim students and make it difficult for them to ask for and receive support.

Over and over again, Muslim students discussed how advocating for resources or pointing to institutional deficiencies came with the burden of being labeled the problem or non-normative in relation to White Supremacy, thus creating great emotional and psychological challenges similar to stereotype threat (Steele, 1997). Wasma discusses how she feels the extent to which she had been burdened by not belonging within her campus when she finally found a space of being loved. She writes:

"Brought together by a love for justice, for ourselves, and for our families -

The power of friendship."

Being on a predominantly white and non-Muslim campus is already difficult to feel belonging and any kind of comfort...This photo was also taken at MSA West; I felt so loved, happy, beautiful, and fulfilled! ...On-campus, I honestly can't find the time and space to be able to relax, reflect, take care of myself or even just enjoy myself with my community. We are all so busy as students and workers, especially since we have to constantly fight against the ways the University perpetuates violent systems of power which personally target us in many ways - because honestly, who else will?"

Here Wasma addresses the lack of compositional diversity on campus that contributes to her sense of belonging and the consequences of White normativity -restricting non-White student's agency. Wasma states that she doesn't have time to live her full humanity because she constantly fights and survives a racist institution. This suggests that respect for race and ethnicity are likely tied to racialized time and the ability to move freely within an institution.

Wasma, Mina, and Gizem wrote the following excerpt in response to a picture of some notes at the administrator's prayer-room task force meeting:

"Institutional Baby Steps"

This photo was taken at a task force meeting to identify a permanent interfaith prayer/meditation space on campus. After at least 20 years of Muslim students at this university and faith organizations having countless discussions with the administration to provide an accessible prayer space on campus to meet our basic needs, administrators have finally started to take our voices into account by making this task force. Although this is a step forward in the right direction, it is a baby step. We recognize the importance of making sure administrators are continuously held accountable. It's unsettling that it took over 20 years

(and for Trump to get elected) for the university to start taking Muslim students' needs seriously.

The Muslim students who authored this excerpt call into question the university's commitments to equity by placing their action in a longer historical trajectory and the sociopolitical context in which Muslim students were denied basic needs. They articulate how the community has spent the last 20 years in perpetual crisis fighting for space to practice their religion safely. The constant attention towards safety and basic resources made it difficult for Muslim students to organize for more substantial changes and resources. This quote demonstrates how perceptions of respect for religion can become institutionalized, shaping students' perceptions of institutional commitments to diversity.

Overall, this section attempted to show how racial and religious (dis)respect manifests in the everyday experiences of Muslims in relation to the institution. I found that Muslims' perceptions of racial and religious respect are shaped by how the institution overlooks intersectionality, enacts racial logics of White -Christian secular normativity that reinforce Muslims' otherness, and inequitable access to resources, all of which contribute to the constraining of Muslims agency. To further explain these findings, I propose the concept of racial-religious decoupling.

DISCUSSION

Racial-Religious Decoupling and the Need for Anti-Racist Institutions

According to prior studies, racism plays a central role in the racialization of Muslims and Islamophobic incidents in educational contexts. However, few studies examined how anti-Muslim racism became institutionalized in campus racial or religious climates to shape Muslims' perceptions of institutional commitments to diversity compared to other groups. This study adopted a critical race perspective to examine survey data and a case study of a photovoice project conducted by Muslims at one university to understand how religious identification shapes students' perceptions of institutional racism. In the quantitative strand, I found that institutional commitment to diversity was significantly mediated by respect for race and religious identity, especially for Muslims compared to Christians. In the qualitative strand, I demonstrated how Muslim students' hyper(in)visibility for their racial and racialized religious experiences creates inequitable access to resources and constrains their agency, ultimately affecting their perceptions of campus commitment and racial-religious respect. From these findings, I adapt Ray's (2019) concept of "racial-decoupling" to take into account religion, and propose the term, racial-religious decoupling to refer to the ways that notions about Muslims as a homogenous religious group legitimates anti-Muslim racism in the form of the unequal distribution of resources, constrained agency of non-dominant racialized-religious groups, and hyper(in)visibility. Racial-religious decoupling extends theories of racialized organizations and critical race theory to explain the ways that anti-Muslim racism can become institutionalized by assuming a separation between race, religion, and inequality. It also explains why Muslims rate both respect for race and respect for

religion lower than their religious peers, which negatively shapes their perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity.

I argue that racial-religious decoupling is an act of institutional negligence. By ignoring the intersections of inequality embedded in race and religion, racial-religious decoupling reinforces the notion that Muslims are a religious-homogenous monolith and that university administrations are religious and politically neutral contexts that cannot support marginalized racialized-religious groups. I show that Muslims' experiences with racism result from both the lack of respect for their race and religious identities and their interactions with White normative Christian secular institutions. While administrators often recognize anti-Semitism as unacceptable racial discrimination, opposing anti-Muslim racism remains an uncertain practice for universities when the official state practices and officials continue to normalize it and perpetuate racial perceptions of Muslims as deviant and foreign Others outside the scope of American belonging. Racial-religious decoupling offers a way to understand the de-legitimation of Muslim experiences on campus by university administrators and a path forward towards a more robust anti-racist agenda that accounts for racialized religion.

This study demonstrated that universities create policies that appeal to and privilege students of the dominant group, and diversity efforts are superficial and narrow (Mitchell, 2018). Schemas about Muslims as a homogeneous religious group rather than a heterogeneous racial group create hegemonic structures that make Black,

White, and other-raced Muslim students feel hyper (in)visible as they are simultaneously racialized and racially invisible when it comes to resources. As a religious group, Muslim students are excluded from resources because of the separation of church and state legal matters. As a heterogeneous racial group, they are also excluded from resources because of the assumptions that all Muslims are Middle Eastern and, therefore, White. Universities also perpetuate anti-Muslim racism through the unequal distribution of resources across time and space and its effect on students' capacities for the agency. As a result, anti-Muslim racism within the university context takes many forms and is mapped onto many different groups and structures with the end goal of perpetuating White supremacy. To address anti-Muslim racism at the institutional level requires an anti-racist politic that addresses anti-blackness and white supremacy at its core, as opposed to religious inclusion.

A key mechanism of racial-religious decoupling is this limitation of racialized-religious groups' agency. Racialized time and labor create an uneven emotional and psychological racial-religious field that shapes the agency of Muslim individuals as they are in permanent crisis and unable to think or imagine future orientations (Nojan, 2021; Ray, 2019; Walcott, 2018). Previous studies have examined how Muslims may be psychologically taxed as a result of the burden of representation (Nasir and Al-Amin, 2006; Sirin & Fine, 2008). The findings of this study suggest that lack of institutional resources compounds this burden. Anti-Muslim racism produces material and physical barriers by withholding basic needs and constraining Muslims ability to feel safe and freely practice religion.

While many studies discuss these findings in the context of religious discrimination, this paper showed how the racialization of Muslims' religious identities, gender, and ethnic-racial identities contributed to their marginality. The stories and lived experiences of students demonstrate how they experience racialized organizations' (Ray, 2019) violence because they are situated at the intersections of multiple social identities. The hyper(in)visibility of their intersectional experiences as women, Muslim, and racial and ethnic minorities exacerbates this marginalization. This study also offers an additional lens to the intersectional experiences of Muslim women. While many Black feminist scholars have theorized Black women's hyper(in)visibility at the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality (Collins, 2002; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Combahee River Collective, 1983; Crenshaw, 1990; Lorde, 1984), few take into account their religious hyper(in)visibility, which may contribute to additional marginalization experiences.

Based on previous findings, it's not surprising that veiled and unveiled Muslim women have different experiences and degrees to hyper(in)visibility (Mir, 2009; Seggie, Nevra, and Sanford, 2010). This study found that wearing the veil increased Muslim hypervisibility and overt and covert forms of anti-Muslim racism. I also found that for a Black Muslim woman unveiled it increased her hyper-invisibility as Muslim. For example, Saliha's denial of meal accommodations by her supervisor may have been a result of anti-Muslim racism or anti-Blackness. Either way, the supervisor did not understand that she was a practicing Muslim. Religious hyper(in)visibility has repercussions for all religious students and requires that

universities be extra diligent in supporting and contributing to the wellbeing of multiple-marginalized students.

These findings suggest that anti-Muslim racism, like other forms of racial projects, operates in various axes of domination and at interpersonal and structural levels (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Omi & Winant, 2014). For example, students had to navigate both overt and covert forms of anti-Muslim sentiments in the classroom in their interactions with staff, and faculty and administration as well as in the community and in sociopolitical crises. These findings are essential for understanding how inequality is created and sustained within democratic and liberal organizations despite their values and commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Institutions of higher education are increasingly attending to their campus racial climates and the need to serve their diverse student bodies. Still, they do so by focusing on single-issue categories, which often understates the impact of race and other categories such as religion.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

Universities have much work to do to adequately serve their diverse student bodies, including creating positive anti-racist climates linked to material resources that mitigate institutions' racialized-religious structures. Findings from this study show that diversity training and religious inclusion are not adequate to address inequalities beyond individualized beliefs and racial-religious discrimination that becomes racially embedded and covert in the everyday operations of the university.

Anti-Muslim racism thrives on the institution's racial-religious decoupling because it separates the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion with its practices, under the guise of secularism. Incorporating an intersectional approach to university contexts could mean reframing the allocation of resources to serve multiple marginalized communities, especially when these institutions purport to be about diversity, equity (not equality), and inclusion. Furthermore, by its nature, racism and anti-Muslim racism are global projects that will not be solved through inclusion and representation. Rather they are based on White supremacy and motivated by racial capitalism and require a more robust interrogation with anti-blackness and capitalism if universities seek to fully counter it. In this way, addressing anti-Muslim racism can motivate a more holistic approach to anti-racist equity.

Future studies should examine across broader samples how different ethnoracial groups within the Muslim community engage with institutional racism. Future research should also test whether and how racial-religious decoupling operates in other institutions and organizations to perpetuate anti-Muslim racism with national samples and at non-research public universities, and whether these negative campus racial-religious climates affect outcomes beyond academic success and retention.

Table 2.1. Descriptive Statistics for All 2016 UC Students

	Percentage of Full Sample
<i>Religious affiliation</i>	
Muslim	2%
Christian	33%
Jewish	2%
Hindu	2%
Buddhist/ Taoist	5%
Sikh	1%
Spiritual/other religion	13%
Nonreligious	43%
<i>Demographics</i>	
<i>Race</i>	
White/Middle Eastern	25%
Black/African-Amer	4%
South Asian	5%
South East Asian	8%
Latinx	25%
East Asian	5%
Filipino/Pacific	5%
Native American/Alaskan	1%
Other Race	3%
<i>Socioeconomic status</i>	
low income background	17%
first generation college student	44%
<i>Gender</i>	
women	60%
nonbinary	2%
<i>Immigrant background (1.5/2nd generation)</i>	
	46%
<i>Controls</i>	
International student	9%
Lives off campus	56%
Transfer student	20%
<i>Major</i>	
arts/humanities	15%
social sciences	32%
STEM	45%
undeclared	8%
<i>Class Level</i>	
Freshman	9%
Sophomore	20%
Junior	26%
Senior	44%
Others	0%
Source: UCUES 2016	N= 63,115

Table 2.2. Regression Analysis of Religious Students Perceptions of Institutional Commitment to Diversity

N= 39244	Model 1: Baseline			Model 2: Accounting for Racial Respect			Model 3: Accounting for Religious Respect		
<i>Institutional Commitment to Diversity</i>	Coef.	St.Err.	Sig	Coef.	St.Err.	Sig	Coef.	St. Err	Sig
Religion (ref. Christian)				0					
Nonreligious	-0.232	0.023	***	-0.232	0.021	***	-0.347	0.022	***
Jewish	-0.412	0.076	***	-0.197	0.068	**	0.124	0.074	
Muslim	-0.389	0.077	***	-0.025	0.07		0.003	0.073	
Sikh	-0.126	0.052	**	-0.115	0.045	*	-0.161	0.046	**
Buddhist/Taoist	0.046	0.096		0.034	0.083		-0.05	0.091	
Hindu	-0.346	0.136	*	-0.298	0.134	*	-0.397	0.129	*
Spiritual/other	-0.256	0.033	***	-0.189	0.03	***	-0.316	0.031	***
Race (ref. White)									
African/Black/Caribbean	-0.851	0.058	***	0.064	0.054		-0.708	0.063	***
Latinx	-0.083	0.033	**	0.242	0.03	***	-0.054	0.031	
South Asian	-0.187	0.069	***	-0.046	0.061		-0.078	0.065	
Southeast Asian	-0.35	0.044	***	-0.176	0.04	***	-0.274	0.042	***
East Asian	-0.399	0.032	***	-0.166	0.029	***	-0.294	0.031	***
Filipino/Pacific Islander	-0.359	0.049	***	-0.153	0.045	**	-0.294	0.047	***
Native Am/Alaskan	-0.113	0.124		0.164	0.121		0.09	0.118	
Other Race	-0.335	0.063	***	-0.106	0.058		-0.198	0.06	**
Gender (ref. Men)									
Women	-0.1	0.021	***	-0.096	0.019	***	-0.095	0.02	***
Non-binary	-1.491	0.081	***	-1.184	0.09	***	-1.285	0.077	***
Log of Income	0.042	0.024	*	-0.027	0.022		-0.014	0.023	
FirstGenCollege Student	0.026	0.024		0.074	0.022	**	0.04	0.023	
1.5/second generation immigrant	-0.106	0.024	***	-0.003	0.022		-0.098	0.023	***
International Student	0.078	0.042	*	0.241	0.039	***	0.05	0.04	
Off campus housing	-0.02	0.021		-0.022	0.019		-0.02	0.019	
Cumulative GPA	0.234	0.021	***	0.154	0.019	***	0.211	0.02	***
Transfer student	0.328	0.03	***	0.267	0.028	***	0.288	0.029	***
Year (ref. Freshman)									
Sophomore	-0.228	0.038	***	-0.098	0.035	**	-0.171	0.036	***
Junior	-0.506	0.039	***	-0.313	0.034	***	-0.403	0.037	***
Senior	-0.613	0.038	***	-0.403	0.034	***	-0.501	0.036	***
Other	-0.234	1.115		-0.045	0.702		-0.288	1.058	
Major (ref. Arts/Humanities)									
Social Sciences	0.067	0.033	**	0.071	0.03	*	0.078	0.031	**
STEM	0.115	0.032	***	0.082	0.029	**	0.102	0.03	**
Undeclared	-0.067	0.044		-0.078	0.04		-0.064	0.042	
Respect for Race				0.726	0.009	***			
Respect for Religion							0.581	0.01	***
Constant	5.034	0.095	***	1.667	0.095	***	2.444	0.099	***
Mean Vif score		1.6			1.6			1.6	
R-squared		0.037			0.199			0.134	

Source: 2016 UCUES, N= 39,244

*** p<.001, **p<.01 * p<.05

Table 2.3. Testing Mediation Effects on Religious Students Perceptions of Institutional Commitment to Diversity.

<i>Respect for Race</i>				<i>Respect for Religion</i>			
<i>Mediation Effect</i>	Mean	[95% Conf. Interval]		<i>Mediation Effect</i>	Mean	[95% Conf. Interval]	
<i>ACME</i>	0.312	0.243	0.391	<i>ACME</i>	0.4207	0.349	0.492
<i>Direct Effect</i>	0.024	-0.115	0.176	<i>Direct Effect</i>	0.0074	-0.143	0.194
<i>Total Effect</i>	0.336	0.174	0.525	<i>Total Effect</i>	0.4281	0.264	0.635
% of Total Effect mediated	0.92	0.593	1.79	% of Total Effect mediated	0.9849	0.662	1.59

Table 2.4. Demographic Characteristics of Photovoice Study Participants

Name	Standing	Division	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Race/Ethnicity	Hijab	Participation
Gizem	Junior	Social Sciences	Non-binary	queer	Latinx	Part-time	Full
Wasma	Junior	Social Sciences	Womxn	queer	Mixed-race (South Asian/White)	Most of the time	Full
Mina	Sophomore	Humanities	Woman	hetero	Afghan	All the time	Full
Afifa	Sophomore	Social Sciences	Woman	hetero	Palestinian	None	Full
Negine	Sophomore	Humanities	Woman	queer	Iranian	None	Full
Saliha	Senior	STEM	Woman	hetero	Sudanese-Black	Former (all the time)	Full
Yasmine	Grad	Social Sciences	Woman	hetero	Mixed-race (Filipinx/Indian)	None	Partial
Facilitator	Grad	Social Sciences	Woman	hetero	Afghan	None	Partial

Image 2.1. “Self-Advocacy”



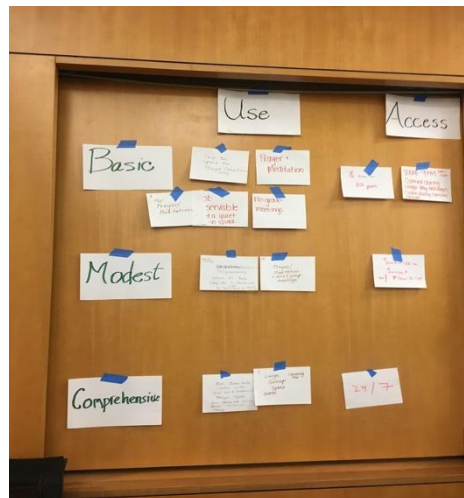
Image 2.2. “Vigil for #OurThreeBrothers: Challenging Anti-blackness”



Image 2.3. "Brought together by a love for justice, for ourselves, and for our families
- The power of friendship."



Image 2.4. "Institutional Baby Steps"



CHAPTER 3

RACIALIZED RELIGION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: INSIGHTS INTO INTRA-MUSLIM RACIAL DIVERSITY ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

Abstract. Sociologists continue to debate the levels of civic participation of multiply-marginalized groups. While scholarship traditionally portrayed marginalized groups as disengaged, others have theorized how group identity threat may incite higher engagement levels. Nevertheless, few studies examine civic engagement among marginalized religious groups through an intersectional framework. This study contributes an empirical account of a racialized-religious community's civic participation compared to other religious and nonreligious groups while accounting for complex religion (i.e., how religion is embedded with inequality). Drawing on large-scale undergraduate survey data, this article suggests that Muslims' faith and collective racialized-religious identities enhance their civic participation compared to other religious groups. Findings extend group identity threat and complex religion theories to consider how a racialized-religious identity may produce different engagement patterns within and across religious communities.

Sociologists have established that religious affiliation and religiosity help shape civic engagement (Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Gordon 1964; De Tocqueville

2003). Civic engagement refers to "working to make a difference in our communities' civic life and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes" (Ehrlich 2000: vi). Civic participation can vary across religious groups as well as racial groups, depending on the mode of engagement (Verba, Schlozman and Henry 1995), the sociopolitical climate informing engagement (Putnam 2000; Putnam and Campbell 2012), and access to resources (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 2006). However, few consider how the inequalities embedded in religion shape civic outcomes for non-dominant religious groups such as Muslims (Wilde 2018; Allen 2019).

Muslims present an interesting case study of religious civic engagement because White Americans and US institutions tend to conflate their religion with racial otherness, despite their racial and ethnic heterogeneity (Love 2017). In the climate after 9/11, Muslims increasingly faced prejudice, hate crimes, and discrimination resulting from the War on Terror that associated their nationalities, bodies, and religious beliefs with terrorism and radicalism (Ali 2014, 2016; Garner and Selod 2015; Selod 2018). In addition to being racial-others, Americans perceive Muslims as civic-others, while the government treats them as citizen-suspects (Ali 2016; Gerteis, Hartmann, & Edgell 2019). War on Terror ideologies cast Muslims outside national imaginaries of American citizenship --as a group disengaged from American society and politics (Razack 2008; Read 2015; Yukich 2019). These studies demonstrate the ways that Muslims may perceive their religious identities to be under

threat. Still, few studies have examined whether Muslims, a group that experiences racism based on their racialized-religious identity, are more likely to engage in civic and political practices than other religious and nonreligious people (Maira 2016; Yukich 2019). Furthermore, most studies that examine Muslims religious identity formation, post 9/11, primarily use samples of individuals with Arab and South Asian backgrounds (Ghaffar-Kucher 2012; Levitt 2008; Naber 2005; Peek 2005). Few consider how engagement varies among racial/ethnic minorities within the Muslim community (such as Southeast Asians and Black/African American Muslims).

The current study examines how Muslim civic engagement compares to their religious and nonreligious peers while considering race, gender, socioeconomic status, and immigrant background. Examining Muslim civic participation adds to our understandings of how complex religion, the inequalities embedded in religion based on sociodemographic divisions (Wilde 2018), applies to a non-dominant religious group that experiences a racialized-religious identity (Peek 2005; Cainkar and Selod 2018; Selod 2018). This study examines Muslim students' civic engagement practices because young Muslim Americans increasingly face instances of discrimination for their religious identities within educational settings over the last two decades (CAIR 2017; Bajaj, Ghaffar-Kucher, Desai 2016; Masci 2019). Previous studies also suggest that college civic engagement predicts future civic and political involvement (Putnam 2000; Verba et al. 1995).

For these reasons, the current study draws on large-scale survey data conducted in Spring 2016 (University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey) to examine how race and religion correspond with civic participation for Muslims within university contexts. This paper brings together social movement concepts such as group identity threat (Klandermans and De Weerd 2000) with the literature on civic engagement among religious groups to examine how a targeted non-dominant religious group is engaged. Specifically, this study analyzes to what extent Muslims are active in student organizations in relation to their religious and nonreligious peers and how race and gender may play a role in their engagement.

Based on logistic regression analyses of survey data, findings show that Muslims have a significantly higher likelihood of participating in student organizations than their religious and nonreligious peers. Among Muslims, there are significant racial and gender differences as well, with Muslim women significantly more involved than Muslim men, and Southeast Asian Muslim students being significantly less involved than White/Middle Eastern North Africans. These findings extend previous literature on civic and political engagement among multiple-marginalized communities (Collins 2002) by demonstrating the nuanced ways that Muslims' religious identities increase the odds of participation across groups while accounting for different outcomes within the community. Results have implications for extending complex religion theory and group identity threat to consider how racial/religious visibility within the Muslim community may enhance or hinder engagement patterns when multiple racial projects are at play.

CIVIC-POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

To understand how Muslims, a marginalized community, may be civically engaged, this paper draws on scholarship that considers how marginality may shape civic and political outcomes. Traditionally, social movement scholarship relied on political process theory to argue that political opportunities, structures, and protest cycles were important factors in shaping and sustaining social change (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 2006). However, scholars have since critiqued this theory for overlooking the role of culture and identity formation, and especially race. Bracey (2016) argues that political process theory's reliance on state-centric forms of participation assumes assimilationist frameworks of race that portray meaningful engagement only in relation to state structures. In contrast, more recent theories take into account broader modalities of civic and political activities and find that people of color, in some cases, are more engaged than Whites on different measures of engagement (Bracey 2016; Corrigan-Brown 2011; Robinson 2019; Marcelo, Barrios, Lopez, and Kirby 2007). For example, while White and Asian youth were more likely to vote, Black and Latinx youth were more likely to engage in "buycotts," justice movements, and activism (Cohen 2010; Terriquez 2015). Black youth especially organize on issues ranging from the decline in public education to the rise in incarceration and the dominance of the prison industrial complex, all of which disproportionately impact their community (Cohen 2010). For non-dominant communities experiencing oppression, civic and political engagement provides

outlets for resistance, healing, and a way to sustain hope (Hope and Spencer 2017; Park, Dizon and Malcolm 2020; Robinson 2019).

Scholarship examining marginalized communities' civic and political engagement points to the importance of collective identity formation for framing and advancing collective action (Bracey 2016; Terriquez 2015). Two theories, in particular, group identity threat (Klandermans and De Weerd 2000) and intersectional mobilization (Terriquez 2015), may help explain how collective identity formation among marginalized communities' may lead to higher engagement. The first of these theories, group identity threat, suggests that in some cases, people become involved when their interests or identities are "threatened" by broader sociopolitical climates, pushing them to protest unjust situations and events (Bowman and Smedley 2013; Klandermans and De Weerd 2000; Meyer and Reyes 2010). These studies emphasize that crisis moments can induce "moral shocks" that make threatened identities more salient and move people to become more engaged to protect their group interests (Peek 2005; Van Dyke 1998). For example, after 9/11, the gendered racialization of American Muslims as "terrorists" and "oppressed" prompted many Muslim youth to strategically identify as "Muslim-first" to "retain positive self-perceptions," "correct public misconceptions," associated with the racialization of their religion (Ghaffar-Kucher 2012; Levitt 2008; Naber 2005; Peek 2005: 235; Yukich 2019).

Intersectional mobilization theory suggests that collective identity formation processes can sometimes present barriers for disadvantaged subgroups within an

already marginalized constituency, such as LGBTQ individuals within an immigrant rights movement (Terriquez 2015). Despite potential barriers to integration, Terriquez (2015) found that LGBTQ youth were the most visible and most engaged in the immigrant rights movement because of their "intersectional consciousness" that became active at various levels of collective identity formation (broader movement, organizational and individual levels) (Terriquez 2015: 343). These theories point to the ways that identity formation and consciousness motivate and sustain collective action and engagement. While this scholarship has increasingly been examining how the intersections of inequality shape experiences of racial, gender, and immigrant groups, few have examined how collective identity formation and marginalization shape the participation of non-dominant religious communities.

RELIGION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Sociologists have long studied how religious membership may lead to civic outcomes due to moral values, social capital, and organizational framings (Gordon 1964; Putnam 2000; Verba, Schlozman, and Henry 1995). Scholars attribute religious people's higher civic activities to their faith-based civic virtues –their sense of responsibility to be honest and neighborly and the organizations they regularly attend (Putnam and Campbell 2010). These studies find that church attendance is associated with participation in other civic associations and that churchgoers are more likely to spend their time and money helping others and engaging in volunteer activities (Putnam 2000; Wuthnow 2004). While studies are increasingly examining the

sociodemographic diversity within Christian denominations (such Evangelicals, Catholics, and other non-protestant Christians), few studies examine the racial, class, and gender diversity within these groups and among non-dominant religious people (Wong 2018; Yoo and Joshi 2020; Yukich and Edgell 2020).

Wilde and Glassman (2016) offer a theory of complex religion as a corrective to previous studies on religion that have overlooked how inequality interacts and overlaps with religion to create divisions within and across religious communities. Through secondary data analysis, Wilde and Glassman (2016) reveal that race and gender shape Christian voting patterns and party affiliations. Wilde and Glassman (2016) find that accounting for sociodemographic diversity and inequality challenges previously held assumptions about how Christian religiosity is associated with the Republican party. They also find that religiously conservative women, Black, and Latinx Christians were more likely to support liberals because of economic and civil rights issues (Wilde and Glassman 2016; Wilde 2018). These findings point to how inequality creates divisions within religious communities along the lines of political affiliation. It is unclear whether inequality also creates divisions for non-Christian communities and shapes the extent of their civic and political engagement. The next section reviews studies on Muslim civic engagement and how divisions within the community and various axes of inequality may shape their civic outcomes.

MUSLIM CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMPLEX RELIGION

Consistent with studies on Christian faith groups, previous studies on Muslim Americans' civic and political engagement find that religious involvement can be associated with higher civic and community involvement (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Peucker 2018; Oskooii and Dana 2018; Westfall 2019). Despite public perceptions that Muslims are "un-American" and "civic-others" (Gerteis, Hartmann, & Edgell 2019), Peucker (2018) finds that Muslim religiosity is not an obstacle to civic engagement, and many Muslims describe civic engagement as their religious duty to "serve humanity" (2018:553). The difference between attending Church services and attending mosque services is that Muslims are not obliged to visit a mosque regularly. As a result, regular mosque attendance may suggest a higher religiosity for Muslims than regular church attendance for Christians (Read 2015). In a study comparing United Kingdom Christians and Muslims, Oskooii and Dana (2018) find that like church attendance, mosque attendance provides social capital that can increase electoral and political participation and civic engagement.

However, mosque attendance and religious involvement may not equally promote civic and political engagement across racial/ethnic and gender groups within the Muslim community (Jamal 2005). One study found that increased religiosity among Arab Muslim women decreased their political activity (Read 2015). Drawing on 2002 survey data from 335 Muslim Americans in the New York area, Jamal (2005) finds that mosque attendance was highly related to increased civic *and* political engagement for Arabs, but only civic engagement for South Asians and neither civic nor political engagement for African American Muslims (Jamal 2005).

These studies suggest that Muslim subgroups may experience different levels of civic and political socialization within religious spaces. While these studies consider racial differences within the community, they are limited because many rely on samples of Arab and South Asian Muslims and often exclude African immigrant and African American Muslims and Southeast Asian Muslims. In addition, few studies explicitly center race and explore how Islam has become racialized to connote differences beyond religious values.

In the sociopolitical context following the U.S. terrorist attacks of 9/11, Muslims' religious identities became more than just faith identities; they became associated with gendered and racialized tropes that characterized them as terrorists and women, in particular as oppressed (Maira 2016). As a result of this racialization, race, and perceptions of racial discrimination also play an essential role in Muslim civic and political engagement (Love 2017). While most scholarship focuses on the post 9/11 racialized surveillance of Muslims, the entanglements between Islam and race emerges from U.S. and European history, some of which includes the targeting of Black Muslims during the civil rights movements, anti-Arab racism during the Cold War, and even Europe's historical anxieties about the “Moor” as a “mix of religion, godless members of the 'sect of Mahomet,' and North African blackness” (Goldberg 2006: 344; Husain 2017; Loomba 2002; Love 2017). In this way, Muslims' racialized-religious identities extend beyond actual beliefs to culture, geography, skin color, phenotype, gender, race, and the body (Cainkar and Selod 2018; Selod 2018). While Muslims of Arab, Asian, Black and African backgrounds were targets of

racism prior to the War on Terror, afterwards these practices were legitimized as state anti-terrorism efforts (Love 2017). The War on Terror racialized surveillance policies targeting Muslims led some Arabs and South Asians to engage in acts of self-censorship (Selod 2018), and counter-surveillance (Maira 2016), while others become politically active to combat state repression (Azab and Santoro 2017; Shanaah 2020).

The racialized surveillance of the Muslim community also has gendered effects on civic and political engagement. Sirin and Katsiaficas (2011) found that immigrant Muslim women with deep religious commitments were more community-involved, especially when perceiving higher discrimination levels. Similarly, Selod (2018) found that Arab and South Asian Muslim women became more civically engaged when experiencing discrimination than Muslim men, who were more likely to engage in self-censorship (Selod 2018; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2011). These studies suggest that the gendered racialization of Muslims' religious identities may also play a role in shaping their civic engagement outcomes. The current study builds on empirical studies of marginalized group engagement by comparing the civic experiences of a non-dominant marginalized religious group with other religious and nonreligious groups while also accounting for complex religion within the Muslim community.

CURRENT STUDY CONTEXT

This study examines how Muslims, a non-dominant religious group with a threatened group identity, compare to other religious and nonreligious groups

regarding civic engagement. It also examines how race and gender divisions produce different civic outcomes within the Muslim community due to complex religion. Based on the theories reviewed above, the first hypothesis is that Muslim students will be more engaged than their religious and nonreligious peers. This hypothesis is supported by previous studies that show that non-dominant marginalized groups may become more engaged when they experience threatened social identities or sociopolitical climates that push them to defend their communities or multiple marginalizations (Azab and Santoro 2017; Klandermans and De Weerd 2000; Naber 2005; Putnam 2000; Terriquez 2015). In particular, Muslim racialization as "potential terrorists" may increase their engagement to combat these stereotypes. Previous studies show that Muslims' faith also encourages their engagement in civic activity (Dana and Oskooii 2018; Peucker 2018; Read 2015). In combination with the racialized religion effect, Muslim faith identities may also increase the chances of civic engagement. The second hypothesis draws on the theory of complex religion and previous studies on the Muslim community to examine racial and gender differences within the community, along civic outcomes. In a previous study of this community, Jamal (2005) found that Arab and South Asian Muslims are the most engaged in political and civic activity (Jamal 2005). I predict that these groups will also be most engaged in this sample for a couple of reasons. First, Middle Eastern North African (MENA)/Whites and South Asian Muslims in my sample come from higher-income backgrounds, and as racial/ethnic majority groups within the Muslim community, they may have more access to social capital and other institutional

resources to encourage engagement (Jasper and Goodwin 2015; Read 2015). Second, they may also be more likely to experience group identity threat through anti-Muslim racism because of stereotypes of the "U.S. Muslim figure" as being swarthy and brown in complexion and from the "Middle East" (Cainkar and Selod 2018; Grewal 2014; Azab and Santoro 2017). Muslim women may also be more engaged because of their multiple marginalized identities (Terriquez 2015) and to combat the gendered racialization they experience through tropes of being "oppressed" by their religion (Sirin and Katsiaficas, 2011; Selod 2018).

Previous scholarship has found participation in voluntary organizations and associations as indicators of civic engagement (Altbach 2007; McFarland and Thomas 2006; Putnam 2000; Verba et al. 1995). Similarly, this study examines student organizational participation in public research universities as an indicator of civic engagement. College campuses are pivotal sites to examine civic engagement since they host a range of cultural, service, professional, and social organizations that encourage engagement (Fischer 2007; Foubert and Urbanski 2006; Quaye and Harper 2014). For example, they offer opportunities to become engaged in student organizations, gain political knowledge, and socialize with diverse peers, strengthening students' community orientation and commitments. Student organizations can include athletic and academic groups, newspapers and publications, Greek organizations, and political and cultural organizations. The extent to which student organizations encourage political engagement can vary (McFarland and Thomas 2006). Students who participate may develop networks useful for future

participation (Altbach 2007; Meyer and Reyes 2010). As a result, those who participate may hold more significant potential than their peers to engage in future civic and political activities (Altbach 2007; McFarland and Thomas 2006).

According to data from nine University of California (UC) campuses, Muslims make up two percent of the undergraduate students at the UC, which is the same percentage of Muslims that live in California (compared to New Jersey, which had the highest percentage of Muslims with three percent) (Mohamed 2018). This State's political and racial diversity provides insight into how Muslims from different parts of the state may experience similar outcomes. Similar to the U.S. population of Muslims, the majority of Muslim students on University of California (UC) campuses come from the following racial/ethnic backgrounds: Middle Eastern North African (categorized as White), Asian (south and southeast), and Black (African, the Caribbean, and African American). While California is not representative of the country, understanding participation in this context can reveal how engagement operates in liberal institutional settings across the nation.

METHODS

The current study draws upon data from the 2016 Undergraduate Student Experience Survey (UCUES) (N=63,115). The 2016 University of California (UC) UCUES surveys over 190,000 undergraduates at UC's nine undergraduate campuses. The 2016 UCUES provided for this study did not include data on individual students' UC campus affiliation to ensure participant confidentiality. The questionnaire

employed a modular design and contained questions related to academic program review, demographics, use of time, general satisfaction, student life and development, academic engagement, and civic engagement.

The 2016 database contains 63,115 final respondents, contributing to an overall response rate of 33%, based on a total of 191,095 invited undergraduates to participate in the survey (IRAP 2018). This study draws on a sample size of 38,732, 61% of total respondents, and excludes individuals who failed to answer questions on participation in student organizations, religious affiliation, race, gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant background, international student status, off-campus living, and time spent on spirituality. Despite the exclusion of 39% of the survey sample, the analysis relies on a subsample of respondents who generally reflect gender, ethnicity, applicant status, and student level of all University of California students (IRAPS 2018).¹ The present analysis includes 1,065 identifying Muslim students. See Table 1 for this group's demographics compared to other religious and nonreligious students, including racial/ethnic demographics within the Muslim community.

Measures

Student organization participation. The dependent variable is a binary outcome based on the following question: Have you been, or are you currently

¹ Institutional Research Assessment and Policy (IRAP) did not report religious representativeness.

involved in a student organization(s)? Non-response was slightly higher for South Asian, Black, and Latinx students than for White students.

Religion. Twenty-seven religions were coded into the following seven distinct categories: Muslim, Spiritual/other religion, Buddhist/Taoist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and all Christians. Students who reported no religious preference, "not particularly spiritual or religious," agnostic, and atheists, were included in a nonreligious category.

Race and Ethnicity. Race is a significant moderator for student engagement and activism on campus (Cohen 2010; Rennick et al. 2013; Reyes 2015; Fischer 2007; Quaye and Harper 2014). Following the Census and UC operationalizations of race, seven racial categories were created: Native American/Alaskan; African/Black/Caribbean; Latinx (Mexican American, Latino/Other Spanish American); East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean); Filipino/Pacific Islander (Pacific Islanders were included in this group because there were minimal cases); South Asian (East Indian/Pakistani); Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Cambodian, Thai/Other Asian); Other races (some students marked others and fill in the blank with another race); White/Middle Eastern North African (MENA): The white designation, unfortunately, could not be disaggregated and includes people from European, as well as, Middle Eastern, West Asian, and North African backgrounds. For each of the above, only one group includes "Hispanics": Latinx. Multiracial

students were automatically sorted into the group that has the lowest number of students as determined by the UC application.

Socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is a crucial determinant of educational experiences and civic engagement (Verba et al. 1995). Socioeconomic status was measured using two variables: A logarithm of total household income of students growing up, and a dummy variable indicating status as a first-generation college student (meaning that they were not raised by at least one parent with a Bachelor's degree) (Verba et al. 1995).

Control Variables

Gender. Prior studies have identified gendered patterns of involvement among the general population (Davila and Mora 2007; Flanagan and Levine 2010) and Muslims (Read 2015; Sirin and Katsiaficas 2007). Gender was analyzed with men as the reference category. Men's experiences were compared to women and non-binary people.

Religious involvement. The studies above suggest that religious involvement is positively associated with community service and extracurricular participation (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Wuthnow 2004). Time spent in religious/ spiritual activities served as an indicator of religious involvement (ranges from 0 to 30 hours).

Immigrant background. A dummy variable compared the children of immigrant parentage (meaning the 1.5 born abroad and raised in the USA, along with

U.S. born second-generation immigrant students) to those with U.S. born parents. Studies suggest that young people's civic engagement with immigrant parentage can differ from those with non-immigrant parents (Terriquez & Kwon 2015).

Other student characteristics that shape engagement are controlled in the analysis: including the general area of study (i.e., STEM/humanities/social sciences), GPA, transfer status, class level, and residential area (on/off-campus, international students, a first-generation college student (Rennick, Smedley, Wallace and Kim 2013; Quaye, John & Harper 2014).

Analysis

I begin by sharing descriptive statistics for all UC students and Muslim students, disaggregated by the majority racial groups MENA/White, Black/African, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Other Races (includes other, Latinx, East Asians, Filipino, and other Asian). Logistic regressions were used to compare the odds of student participation in an organization among Muslims and their religious and nonreligious peers while controlling for other factors. In Table 2, Model 1 is a baseline model that examines how Muslim student's organization participation differs from that of other religious groups. Model 2 adds demographic variables of race, gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant background, control variables, and religious involvement in the analysis.

To understand variations in civic participation among Muslims results in Table 3 include a separate logistic regression analysis that uses only data from the

1,065 Muslims in the sample that answered the question if they participated in a student organization and indicated their race (n=718). The first model serves as the baseline group examining racial differences on civic outcomes using White/MENA as the reference category; a second regression model incorporates gender and additional demographic characteristics (Model 2). A third model adds control variables.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 describes the survey sample. The left column presents descriptive statistics for the full sample the right columns present information about the Muslim subsample, disaggregated by race. Most students identify as nonreligious (43%), followed by Christian (33%), and spiritual /other religion (13%). Muslims and other non-dominant religious groups such as Jews and Hindus make up two percent of the full sample, while Buddhists/Taoists make up five percent and Sikhs about one percent. Sixty-one percent of students in the UC sample participate in student organizations. Overall, 68% of Muslim students participated in organizations, with some variations across race. Among the full sample, most UC students identified as White (25%), Latinx (25%), and Asian (23%). Asians disaggregated by ethnicity/region included: Southeast Asians (8%), Filipino/Pacific Islanders (5%), South Asians (5%), and East Asians (5%). Black/African Americans made up four percent of respondents and Native Americans/Alaskans about one percent. Students who marked some other race were about three percent of the full sample. About sixty

percent of respondents were women, and a little less than half were first-generation college students (44%).

Among Muslim students, most identified as MENA/White (44%) and South Asian (29%), followed by a minority of Southeast Asian (13%), Black/African (8%), and Other non-White races (7%). Southeast Asian and Other non-White Muslim students are more likely to be international students (13% and 14%, respectively). Across racial groups, the majority of Muslims identified as either the children of immigrants (2nd generation) or came to the U.S. under the age of 17 (1.5 generation) (76%-90%). Like the full sample, the majority of Muslim respondents were women. Black and Southeast Asian Muslim students (47% and 40%) have a higher percentage of being first-generation college students than MENA and South Asian Muslims (33-36%).

Student Engagement for All Students: Logistic Regression Results

The first set of logistic regression analyses shown in Table 2 compares Muslim students' campus-based civic engagement to other religious groups and the nonreligious. Statistically significant results shown in Model 1 indicate that, except for Jewish students, other religious and nonreligious students have significantly lower odds of participation than Muslim students. Meanwhile, Jewish students exhibit slightly higher odds of participation when compared to Muslim students. Hindus had lower odds than Muslims, but the coefficient was not significant. See Table 2.

After accounting for race, gender, income, immigrant background, and other controls in Model 2, the odds of participating in student organizations were significantly lower for Christians (-30%, $p < .0001$), Hindus (-29%, $p < .01$), Buddhist/Taoists (-38%, $p < .0001$), Sikhs (-38%, $p < .01$), Spiritual other religions (-37%, $p < .0001$), and nonreligious (-48%, $p < .0001$). Though Jewish students were 6% more likely to participate, results were no longer significant when accounting for race, class, immigrant background, and other student descriptors.

This model also demonstrates racial patterns in participation. Compared to Whites, Native American/Alaskans (65%, $p < .01$), Black/African students (45%, $p < .0001$), and Filipino and Pacific Islander students (44%, $p < .0001$) exhibit the highest odds of engaging in student organizations after accounting for religion, religious involvement, gender, socioeconomic status, and student characteristics. This result points to the importance of disaggregating Asian American groups to understand this heterogeneous community's nuances. Women and higher-income students had 21% higher odds of engaging in student organizations when accounting for other correlations.

Control variables associated with increased odds of engagement among students include higher GPA and class levels (i.e., upper-level students had the highest odds of engagement). Being a transfer student (-63%, $p < .0001$), first-generation college student (-14%, $p < .0001$), international student (-20%, $p < .0001$) and living off-campus (-29%, $p < .0001$), is associated with lower odds of engagement.

Students who were STEM majors or undeclared also exhibited significantly lower odds of participating in organizations than humanities majors ($p < .0001$). A student's time spent on spirituality significantly increased the odds of engagement by 8% (1.083, $p < .0001$). These results point to how civic engagement outcomes continue to be shaped by religious, racial, gender, class differences while accounting for student characteristics. It also shows that Muslims remain the most engaged, even when accounting for these other factors.

Intra-Muslim Student Engagement: Logistic Regressions Results

Table 3 compares campus-based civic engagement within the Muslim community across race and other demographics. Muslims in the sample ($n=1,065$) comprised five main groups, MENA/White, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Black/African, and Other Non-White Race. Results in Model 1 ($n=718$) indicate that overall, other race Muslims² were the only group to be significantly more engaged than MENA/White Muslims (2.441, $p < .05$). While Black and South Asians also had higher odds than MENA/White Muslims (63% and 39%), these results were not significant. Southeast Asian Muslims were the only racial group with lower odds (-36%), but these results were not significant in Model 1.

² Students who marked "Other race Muslims" included East Asians, Latinx, and Filipino Muslims as well as those who did not identify with any of the following categories (Black/African American/Caribbean; South Asian; Southeast Asian and White, Middle Eastern, North African)

In Model 2, Other-race (non-White) Muslims remain significantly more likely to participate in student organizations (162%). It also shows that Muslim women are significantly more likely to participate in student organizations by 69% when accounting for race, income, and immigrant background ($p < .01$). Muslims with higher incomes also had higher odds of engagement (47%, $p < .05$), while those who were the first in their families to attend college had lower odds of participation first-generation college students (-32%, $p < .05$). Immigrant background did not significantly predict any differences within the religious community.

The inclusion of control variables and religious involvement in Model 3 resulted in significantly lower odds of campus-based civic engagement among Southeast Asian Muslims (-51%, $p < .01$) compared to MENA/White Muslims. When accounting for additional controls such as international student status, transfer students, off-campus housing, GPA, class levels, major and religious involvement, the odds of participation in student organizations increases for Muslim women to 84% more likely to participate than men, but socioeconomic status no longer accounts for statistically significant differences. Meanwhile, results show that Muslim international students were significantly more likely to be involved than their U.S. raised counterparts (185%, $p < .05$). Like the full sample, being an upperclassman (4.308, $p < .0001$ for seniors) significantly increased odds of participation, while primary and grade point average yielded no significant differences among Muslims. Hours spent on spirituality significantly increased Muslims' odds of engagement by 25% ($p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

This paper found that Muslims were significantly more likely to be engaged in civic activities than their religious and nonreligious peers. All other religious and nonreligious groups were significantly less involved in civic organizations on campus than Muslims when accounting for race, gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant background, religiosity, and college student characteristics. While Jewish students initially had slightly higher odds of engagement than Muslims, the results were no longer significant when accounting for differences in race, gender, immigrant background, and other controls. Muslims' religious identity leads them to be more civically engaged than other religious groups; this is likely because of the ways that Muslims religious identities are racialized and subject to discrimination in the current climate. This study extends group identity threat theory, which has primarily explained participation in social movements, to study a marginalized religious group's civic engagement (Jasper and Goodwin 2015). These findings build on complex religion by demonstrating through quantitative data how a heterogeneous racialized-religious group's civic involvement compared to other religious and nonreligious groups while accounting for intra-community differences.

Muslims' higher likelihood of civic participation than other religious groups can be explained by previous studies documenting how Islamic religious values (Dana and Oskooii 2018; Peucker 2018) and War on Terror racialization increase this group's engagement (Azab and Santoro 2017; Maira 2016). Even when accounting

for time spent on spirituality on the full model comparing all students, Muslims remained more engaged than other groups. Among Muslims in this study, time spent on spirituality increased odds of engagement by 36% while accounting for race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other social and student characteristics. This result suggests that Muslim student's religious involvement is associated with increased civic engagement on campus. This finding is consistent with previous studies in other Western non-majority countries that suggest that Muslims find civic responsibility a vital part of their faith (Harris and Roose 2014; Peucker 2018; Oskooii and Dana 2018). Previous research on how Muslims racialized religious identities promote engagement may also contribute to their higher odds of participation compared to other faith groups (Azab and Santoro 2017; Cainkar and Selod 2018; Jamal 2005; Levitt 2008; Naber 2005; Maira 2016). As a racialized religious group, Muslims experience anti-Muslim racism in discourse, policies, and everyday interactions, even on college campuses (Sheehi 2011; CAIR 2017). Muslims may be more engaged not only because of their religious values, but also to educate others, combat stereotypes, resist repression and find community and hope (Azab and Santoro 2017; Hope and Spencer 2017; Shanaah 2020; Yukich 2019).

This study also extends previous studies on Muslim civic and political engagement by comparing racial and ethnic minority subgroups such as Southeast Asians and Black/African American Muslims with Middle Eastern/North Africans, the group whose political activity has been most studied. Results demonstrate that compared to White/Middle Eastern North African Muslims, Southeast Asian had a

significantly lower likelihood of being engaged. Southeast Asian Muslims may be significantly less engaged for a couple of reasons. First, in the national imaginary, Arabs and South Asians have been the most prominent groups targeted for anti-Muslim racism and Black Muslims for anti-blackness and anti-Muslim racism (Cainkar and Selod 2018; Khabeer 2016). Stereotypes of the “U.S. Muslim figure” as being swarthy and dark in complexion and from the “Middle East” may make certain Muslim subgroups experience group identity threat more heavily. Second, Southeast Asians may also be politicized in

different ways based on different political contexts in their countries of origin (Sarkissian 2012) or competing racial projects that cast Southeast Asians as model minorities and perpetual foreigners (Chan 2011; Omi and Winant 2014). Third, as ethnic and religious minorities within campus, Southeast Asians may be treated differently by student organizations themselves (i.e., if the organizations are mostly Middle Eastern or South Asian, other Muslims may not feel like they belong). Additional research should examine how this sub-group within the Muslim community experiences racialization in the U.S. context based on their multiple-marginalized identities and why their civic outcomes are significantly lower than others in the community. This finding has implications for the applicability of group identity threat and its motivation for engagement across non-dominant racial and religious groups. It also addresses how complex religion can explain variance within a group, even amidst a collective racialized-religious identity.

This study also provides empirical evidence for Muslim women's higher engagement outcomes while accounting for racial differences, socioeconomic status, religious involvement, immigrant background, and other student-related characteristics. It may be that college Muslim women are significantly more engaged than men. However, previous studies have found this pattern across generations and education levels due to Muslim women's gendered racialization (Selod 2018). Intersectional mobilization theory suggests that multiple marginalized groups may be more likely to mobilize because of their intersectional consciousness (Terriquez 2015); Muslim women's marginalization as a result of race, religion, and patriarchy may further encourage their engagement.

Group identity threat and racialized religion emerge as a possible explanation for Muslim international students' higher civic engagement as well. Muslim international students were 185% more likely to become engaged civically on campus than domestic Muslim students (while international students in the full sample were significantly less likely to be engaged than domestic students). Engagement may be more critical for Muslim international students since their ethnic, national origins, in addition to their religious identities, are likely to be implicated in the War on Terror racial project and the most recent "Muslim ban" that restricted many of them from visiting their homes at the risk of not being able to come back. Muslim international students may be especially affected because of the relationship between their racialized religious identities as Muslims in the U.S. and their diasporic and imperial subjectivity based on their national origins (Azab and Santoro 2017; Kibria 2011).

Muslims from certain countries may also have a particular history of activism in their home countries and politicized identities that may encourage their engagement (Sarkissian 2012).

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study illuminated how a religious community's racialization may increase civic participation compared to other religious and non-religious groups. It also showed how inequalities embedded in religion produce variability on civic participation levels within a religious community, even amidst a collective racialized-religious identity. This study used data that encompassed nine public research universities from one State. Future studies should examine whether similar patterns hold across a national sample and with larger racial subsample populations within the Muslim community in different contexts. While descriptive statistics showed more racial differences within the Muslim community, racial differences were not significant in the logistic models except Southeast Asians. A larger subsample for each racial/ethnic group and, in particular, Black/African American Muslims would help determine if sample size played a role in producing inconclusive results. The low standard errors suggest that future studies might find significant differences among subgroups if the sample size was larger for each subgroup.

Civic participation on University of California campuses may be inflated as more than half participated in an organization on campus (61%). Generalizations to other four-year public research universities should compare the baseline levels of

engagement before making comparisons. Furthermore, participation in a student organization is a standard indicator for civic participation; however, without information about the type of organization, there are limited claims about political engagement. Future studies should account for the type of student organization students are involved in (Reyes 2015). For example, in the case of Muslims, previous studies have documented how Palestinian activism among student organizations can lead to increased surveillance and suspicion from administration (Chatterjee and Maira 2014; Maira 2016; Turk, Senzaki, and Rowther 2012). Future studies should further examine what elements of campus climate and institutional-level factors may hinder or promote engagement. While the database for this study did not have any campus-level data, all universities in the sample employ similar institutional opportunities for engagement.

Given data from this project derived from students attending four-year public research universities in California, generalizations of civic engagement patterns should be made to Muslim college students. Studying college-aged Muslim engagement provides some relevant patterns to Muslims, in general, because adults aged 18 to 39 make up 60% of the Muslim American adult population, and according to Pew Research Center, the proportion of American Muslims that have college or postgraduate degrees (31%) is equivalent to US adults as a whole. Future studies should account for Muslim civic engagement patterns outside of college and determine how post-college participation patterns compare to non-college graduates. Since higher education provides direct access to civic opportunities (Flanagan and

Levine 2007; Perrin and Gillis 2019), Muslim college students are likely to have more civic engagement options and be involved at higher rates than non-college graduates. Future studies should examine whether group identity threat continues to enhance civic participation among non-college graduates within the Muslim community compared to other religious communities. Finally, this survey analysis can be further nuanced with qualitative studies to examine why Muslim students may or may not be engaged.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics for All UC Students and Muslims

	Full sample	Muslims				
		MENA/ White	Black/ African	South Asian	Southeast Asian	Other Race (non-white)
Student Organizational Participation	61%	63%	70%	73%	61%	81%
<i>Religious affiliation</i>						
Muslim	2%	44%	8%	29%	13%	7%
Christian	33%					
Jewish	2%					
Hindu	2%					
Buddhist/ Taoist	5%					
Sikh	1%					
Spiritual/other religion	13%					
Nonreligious	43%					
<i>Demographics</i>						
<i>Race</i>						
White	25%					
Black/African-Amer	4%					
South Asian	5%					
South East Asian	8%					
Latinx	25%					
East Asian	5%					
Filipino/Pacific	5%					
Native American/Alaskan	1%					
Other Race	3%					
<i>Socioeconomic status</i>						
low income background	17%	17%	37%	13%	19%	15%
first generation college student	44%	36%	47%	33%	40%	33%
<i>Gender</i>						
women	60%	61%	68%	63%	65%	60%
nonbinary	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
<i>Immigrant background (1.5/2nd generation)</i>	46%	81%	77%	90%	76%	78%
<i>Controls</i>						
International student	9%	9%	6%	6%	13%	14%
Lives off campus	56%	64%	61%	51%	50%	56%
Transfer student	20%	38%	31%	26%	24%	28%
<i>Major</i>						
arts/humanities	15%	12%	22%	16%	10%	17%
social sciences	32%	27%	24%	30%	30%	28%
STEM	45%	56%	48%	50%	54%	53%
undeclared	8%	5%	6%	5%	7%	3%
<i>Class Level</i>						
Freshman	9%	8%	13%	8%	10%	11%
Sophomore	20%	17%	22%	19%	20%	8%
Junior	26%	29%	21%	26%	24%	31%
Senior	44%	46%	21%	47%	47%	49%
Others	0%	0%	45%	0%	0%	1%
<i>Hours spent on spirituality</i>						
None	68%	37%	24%	20%	41%	33%
1 to 5	21%	40%	51%	46%	37%	40%
6 to 10	5%	11%	12%	18%	12%	14%
Over 10	6%	12%	13%	16%	10%	13%
Sample sizes:	63,115	463	87	307	135	72

Source: UCUES 2016

Table 3.2. Logistic Regression Results for Engagement Among all Muslim Students

Student Organization Participation	Model 1 Odds Ratio (SE)	Model 2 Odds Ratio (SE)
<i>Religious affiliation (ref: Muslim)</i>		
Christian	.747 (.063)**	0.704 (.064)***
Jewish	1.327 (.158)*	1.060 (.133)
Hindu	.953 (.112)	0.713 (.093)**
Buddhist/ Taoist	.677 (.064)***	0.622 (.064)***
Sikh	.683 (.104)*	0.621 (.103)**
Spiritual/other religion	.656 (.057)***	0.628 (.059)***
Nonreligious	.556 (.046)***	0.520 (.047)***
Demographics		
<i>Race (Ref. White/MENA)</i>		
Black/African-Amer		1.448 (.096)***
Latinx		0.967 (.035)
South Asian		1.192 (.093)*
Southeast Asian		1.242 (.061)***
East Asian		1.128 (.041)**
Filipino/Pacific		1.435 (.081)***
Native American/Alaskan		1.646 (.240)**
Other Race		1.102 (.078)
<i>Gender (ref. Men)</i>		
Women		1.214 (.028)***
Nonbinary		1.080 (.096)
<i>Socioeconomic Status</i>		
Income (Log)		1.214 (.032)***
First generation college student		0.856 (.023)***
<i>Immigrant Background (1.5/2nd generation)</i>		
		1.052 (.028)
Controls		
<i>International Student</i>		
		0.804 (.037)***
<i>Lives off campus</i>		
		0.709 (.016)***
<i>Cummulative GPA</i>		
		1.124 (.026)***
<i>Transfer student</i>		
		0.369 (.012)***
<i>Class level (Ref: Freshman)</i>		
Sophomore		1.541 (.063)***
Junior		2.266 (.095)***
Senior		2.847 (.118)***
Others		1.377 (1.760)
<i>Major (Ref. Arts/Humanities)</i>		
Social sciences		1.00 (.037)
STEM		0.874 (.031)***
Undeclared		0.709 (.034)***
<i>Hours spent on Spirituality</i>		
		1.083 (.012)***
Intercept	2.428 (.199)***	0.697 (.095)**

Source: UCUES 2016, Sample size, N=38732

p<.05*<.01**, <.0001***

Table 3.3. Logistic Regression Results for Enagement Among all Muslim Students

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Student Organization Participation	Odds Ratio (SE)	Odds Ratio (SE)	Odds Ratio (SE)
<i>Race (Ref: MENA/White)</i>			
Black/African-American	1.634 (.551)	1.753 (.605)	1.678 (.604)
South Asian	1.394 (.278)	1.331 (.273)	1.055 (.232)
South East Asian	.639 (.156)	.635 (.158)	0.492 (.132)**
Other Non-White Race	2.441 (1.050)*	2.631 (1.145)*	2.124 (.974)
<i>Gender women</i>		1.685 (.291)**	1.838 (.343)**
<i>Socioeconomic Status</i>			
Income (Log)		1.468 (.261)*	1.348 (.260)
First generation college student		.676 (.123)*	0.739 (.142)
<i>Immigrant Background (1.5/2nd generation)</i>		.956 (.224)	1.123 (.383)
Controls			
<i>International Student</i>			2.853 (1.363)*
<i>Lives off campus</i>			0.614 (.117)*
<i>Cummulative GPA (0-4.0)</i>			0.859 (.154)
<i>Transfer student</i>			0.284 (.063)***
<i>Class level (Ref: Freshman)</i>			
Sophomore			1.596 (.525)
Junior			2.458 (.804)**
Senior			4.308 (1.450)***
<i>Major (Ref: Arts/Humanities)</i>			
Social sciences			0.887 (.295)
STEM			0.763 (.237)
Undeclared			0.754 (.346)
<i>Hours spent on Spirituality</i>			1.251 (.092)**
Intercept	2.165 (.2657)***	.982 (.416)	0.790 (.803)

Source: UCUES 2016; Sample size, N=718

p<.05* <.01** <.0001***

*excluded nonbinary and others in class level because there were no Muslim cases

CHAPTER 4

“NOW I ALWAYS SAY I’M AFGHAN:” EXAMINING ANTI-MUSLIM ETHNORACISM THROUGH REFUGEE RACIALIZED HAUNTINGS

Abstract. This article argues for a conceptual reframing of anti-Muslim racism to anti-Muslim ethnoracism to account for the particularities of the racialization processes of Muslims. Drawing on 43 semi-structured interviews with Afghan American refugees, I argue that ethnonational, diasporic, and refugee identities contribute to the racializing of Muslim Americans and shape how Muslims may respond and resist their racialization. Specifically, I describe the racialized hauntings, a combination of visible stereotypes and invisible effects of imperialism and refugee backgrounds, that shape Muslims' racialization experiences with regards to hyper(in)visibility, self-surveillance, and cultural survivance.

Anti-Muslim racism is racial discrimination affecting Muslims, such as the conflation of phenotype, culture, and religion with visual cues of what troublemakers or terrorists may look like (Ali 2016; Maira 2009; Selod 2018). However, anti-Muslim racism also targets non-Muslims who appear to be Muslim based on their background (Middle Eastern North African peoples) and features (swarthy phenotypes) (Garner and Selod 2015; Love 2017). The War on Terror led to widespread beliefs and policies targeting Muslim Americans as national security threats and dangerous terror suspects (Cainkar 2009). The focus on the racialization

of religion after 9/11 overlooks how Muslims experience(d) racism based on their ethnonational, migrant, and imperial histories.

Immigrants' ethnicity and religion come second when theorizing racialization because classical sociology theories suggest immigrants' religious and ethnic identities eventually become symbolic as generations assimilate into American culture (Alba 2009; Gordon 1964). Arab Americans, who historically fought for inclusion into Whiteness for citizenship rights, were predicted to eventually become culturally integrated into U.S. society just like Jewish people (Alba 2009). Yet, systemic racism, such as President Trump's 2017 Executive Order to ban entry of targeted refugees from several Muslim-majority countries, clarifies that neither Muslims nor refugees are welcome in the U.S., especially not *Muslim refugees*. Despite multiple modalities in which the state racializes Muslims, few studies examine how Muslim refugees' imperial subjectivities shape their anti-Muslim racism experiences (Maira 2016; Maghbouleh 2017). The research of Muslim and immigrant racialization typically focuses too narrowly on U.S.-centric racial formations, failing to consider the global racial order that sustains and perpetuates U.S. domestic racialization (Aranda and Rebollo-Gil 2004; Kim 2008; Grosfoguel and Georas 2000).

Afghans present a theoretically significant case to study the role of U.S. imperialism and refugee identities in racialization because of their majority Muslim backgrounds and their continued displacement due to the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

After 9/11, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to find and destroy the terrorist group Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and to "save oppressed" Afghan women (Mamdani 2005). Despite being one of the largest protracted refugee communities in the world, Afghans comprise a minority in the U.S. because of post 9/11 revised immigration policies that sought to keep out "dangerous" Muslims, even while U.S. interventions abroad continue to displace them (Gowayed 2020). Few studies examine how Afghans experience racialization in the U.S. amidst the ongoing U.S. war in Afghanistan (Gowayed 2020).

The U.S. War on Terrorism marked a turning point in which the perception of Muslims as "terrorists, terrorist suspects, and potential terrorists" became widespread and threatening enough to justify domestic and foreign military interventions (Cainkar and Selod 2018). Many scholars examining Islamophobia post 9/11 draw on Omi and Winant's theories of racialization and inadvertently assume that Muslims' religious identities had a "previously unclassified relationship" to race (1986: 111; Garner and Selod 2015). However, postcolonial and critical theorists demonstrate how Islam in the view of the West has always been perceived as a racial and religious threat because of historical anxieties about Muslims associated with Blackness and "old age views of Islam as an acceptable competitor to the Christian West" (Husain 2017; Said 1981: xxxix; Goldberg 2006; Rana 2016). Thus, empirical studies that focus primarily on Muslim religious racialization overlook how Muslims experience racism based on geopolitical, ethnonational, migrant, and imperial histories.

This paper begins to address this gap in racial formations by contributing an empirical account of how ethnonational, refugee, and diasporic identities shape a Muslim subgroup's racialization, not as "previously unclassified" but as intersecting historical-sociopolitical configurations. This paper answers: How do Afghans experience racialization? What role do refugee/ethnonational backgrounds play in Muslims' racialization? Drawing on 43 in-depth interviews with Afghan American refugees, I identify *racialized hauntings* as the mechanism by which *anti-Muslim ethnoracism* manifests in an ethnic and refugee community experiencing Muslim racialization. Racialized hauntings are the racialization experiences participants described that are tied to both stereotypes based on visible identities as well as the invisible effects of imperialism that make themselves known in the present and among future generations (Espiritu 2006:486; Gordon 2008). Attuning to racialized hauntings reveals how Muslims' racialization maps onto previous socio-political racial formations before the War on Terror. I conclude by arguing for the importance of studying *anti-Muslim ethnoracism* to better understand the effect of ethnonational, migrant, and imperial relations on Muslims' particular experiences with U.S. discrimination and their responses to it.

In the following sections, I demonstrate the inadequacies of assimilationist theories for explaining immigrant Muslims' racial experiences in favor of immigrant racialization. I argue that immigrant racialization theories, anti-Muslim racism, and empirical studies of Afghans can be extended through an examination of ethnoracism that includes imperial racialization.

IMMIGRANT BOUNDARIES TO INTEGRATION

Assimilationists predicted that Arab and Muslim Americans, like Jews, would become part of American mainstream pluralism even if initially they experienced a trial period of discrimination (Alba et al. 2009). However, assimilationist frameworks fail to explain the persistence of discrimination against Middle Eastern North African "White" immigrants who have achieved social and economic mobility yet still experience systemic discrimination (Khoshnevis 2019; Maghbouleh 2017; Naber 2008). Two decades past the start of the War on Terror, the levels of discrimination and hate incidents against Arab and Muslim people exceed the levels during the period immediately following 9/11, demonstrating how Muslims and Middle Eastern-perceived people continue to be Othered (Cainkar 2009; Jamal and Naber 2008; Love 2017). Today, Arab Americans and other Middle Eastern and West Asian groups, such as Iranians, are more likely to identify as "Brown" as opposed to White because of ongoing racism and prejudice against their communities (Maghbouleh 2017; Zopf 2017). They are also more likely to hold on to transnational affiliations as sources of cultural pride and resistance (Abu El-Haj 2015; Kibria 2011).

Ethnoracism derives from sociologists' critiques of assimilationist theory and the notion that ethnicity fades over generations and with social mobility (Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Purkayastha 2005). Studies of ethnoracism with Puerto Rican immigrants consider how racialization extends beyond phenotype "to involve ethnic and global dimensions such as national origin, culture, language, religion, the

historical relationship between colonial powers and their political subjects, and race" (Aranda and Rebello-Gill 2004: 913). When applied to Muslim racialization, such a theory reveals how anti-Muslim racism is a global and fluid racial project (Daulatzai and Rana 2018). Imperial racialization suggests that before arriving in the U.S., immigrants and their countries become racialized through the gaze of White and Western supremacy (Espiritu 2006; Gawayed 2020; Said 1978). For example, the U.S. has labeled certain countries, such as Afghanistan, as uncivilized, premodern, dangerous places that require U.S. interventions to bring democracy and liberation (Espiritu 2006, 2017; Gans 2017; Gregory 2004). These perceptions shape not only foreign military interventions but the hyper-securitization of borders and policies that profile and police U.S. citizens and noncitizens who appear to be from those regions (Gans 2017; Gawayed 2020; Rexhepi 2018). Theories of imperial racialization and ethnoracism address the need for a more robust racial theory of immigrant incorporation.

MUSLIM RACIALIZATION AMID U.S. EMPIRE

The study of Muslim Americans' racial experiences requires an understanding of the colonial and imperial forces that sustain and motivate domestic racialization and subjugation (Maira 2009; Daulatzai and Rana 2018; Husain 2017). U.S. foreign policy has relied on anti-Arab and anti-Muslim stereotypes to justify military interventions in Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other "Middle Eastern" countries (Kumar 2012; Mamdani 2005). U.S. perceptions of the "Middle East" as a

desirable place for conquest and to secure access to oil has roots in Europe's Orientalist colonial legacies (Bald 2015; Said 1997; Kumar 2012). The one-sided coverage of Muslims as terrorists and extremists elides "what the U.S. does through its imperial power" and instead highlights what "Muslims and Arabs by their very flawed nature are" to justify racial violence (Said 1997 [1981]: xxii; Maghbouleh 2017; Naber 2000; Rana 2016; Salaita 2006).

Most empirical studies of anti-Muslim racism fail to consider longer histories of racialization before the War on Terror. Instead, most focus on post 9/11 effects and suggest that certain Arab and South Asian Muslim groups experience reactive religious identities or "Muslim-first" identities that take precedent over their ethnic affiliations (Peek 2005; Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009). These studies have also found that Arab and South Asian Muslims practice self-surveillance or counter-surveillance to mitigate their targeted religious identity's social and political consequences (Maira 2009; 2016; Selod 2018). However, few empirical studies also explore how Muslim subjects' ethnic, refugee, cultural/diasporic identities, and imperial subjectivities intersect within this religious racialization (Abu El-Haj 2015; Maghbouleh 2017; Maira 2009; Mobahser 2006). This gap is essential to address given that the War on Terror racial project overlaps with ongoing racial formations, including U.S. imperialism abroad that continues to displace Muslim refugees while at the same time banning their entry (Gowayed 2020).

AFGHANS IMPERIAL RACIALIZATION

Few studies examine Afghan American refugees' experiences with racialization, despite ongoing war and U.S. interventions in Afghanistan before 9/11. Studies on Afghan experiences in the U.S. are limited, focusing almost entirely on first-generation mental health and integration from psychological and social work perspectives (Alemi, James, and Montgomery 2016; Lipson 1993; Lipson and Omidian 1997). These studies center on first-generation mental health issues involving social, familial, health, and economic problems, thereby painting Afghan refugees as victims of trauma.

Afghan Americans present an interesting case to study imperial racialization (Kim 2008) because early in the War on Terror, the U.S. marked Afghanistan as the geographical home for terror, Osama bin Laden's encampment, and the oppression of women (Gregory 2004). However, U.S. government involvement in Afghanistan is not new. During the Cold War, the U.S. and its allies provided arms for rival "Islamist" "Freedom Fighters" (as President Reagan later called them in response to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979). The U.S. framed its intervention in the Soviet-Afghan War of 1979-89 as a "humanitarian crusade to save indigenous Afghans from communism" (Maira 2016:9). This rhetorical positioning of "saving" Afghan people obfuscates U.S. imperial interests and reinforces their depictions as trauma victims.

In 2001, the U.S. once again became involved in Afghanistan to "save the oppressed Afghan women" and "bring" democracy to the region (Fitzgerald and Gould 2009). This "rescue" mission has lasted 20 years, making it the longest war in the history of the U.S., and resulting in Afghans being the most protracted refugee population in the world. While some Afghans are considered "good" and are awarded special visa permissions because they cooperated with U.S. troops in their homeland, the vast majority are considered "bad" (Crews 2016; Gowayed 2020). Even when fully integrated, the "refugee" is still considered a second-class citizen and foreign (Espiritu 2006). This rhetoric reinforces the notion of American exceptionalism as a multicultural state while maintaining militarism domestically, at borders, and abroad (Espiritu 2006; Rexhepi 2018).

Ethnoracism enables an analysis of Afghans' racialization that accounts for the colonial and imperial interests that have contributed to the expulsion of Afghan people from their homeland (Crews 2016). In light of these research gaps, I examine how Afghans experience racialization and ask: What role do their ethnonational backgrounds and imperial contexts of refuge play in their racialization as Muslims? Answering this question allows me to nuance theories of immigrant incorporation and Muslim racialization to consider the persistent effects of U.S. imperial relations and refugee backgrounds on racial experiences.

CURRENT STUDY

Table 4.1. Afghan American Participant Demographics (N=43 interviews, 38 participants)

Religion (Islam)	38
Generation	
First/1.5 gen	13
Second-gen	25
Gender	
Women	22
Men	6
Age	
(18-22)	20
(23-27)	13
(28-32)	6
Interviews collected: (2015-2016)	20
Interviews collected: (2019-2020)	23*
Total Interviews	43

*Seven were follow-up interviews from participants interviewed in 2015-2016

Afghan Refugees in the U.S.

The U.S. war in Afghanistan spans two decades and is the longest war in the history of the U.S., yet admission ceilings for Afghan refugees have always been limited. The largest exodus of Afghan refugees resulted after the Soviet Union invaded the country in 1979, peaking in 1982 with about 5 million Afghans fleeing to neighboring countries of Pakistan and Iran. A smaller number of refugees continued to trek to Europe and North America. Peoples escaping communism were granted permanent residency and asylum in the U.S. in theory, but admission ceilings limited the number of Afghans permitted to enter. For example, Suhrke and Klink (1987)

reported: "For F.Y. (fiscal year) 1984 the proposed ceiling for refugees from the Near East and South Asia (mainly Iranians and Afghans) was 6,000 out of a total of 72,000; the corresponding figures for F.Y. 1985 were 5,000 out of 70,000 (Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, 1984)" (95-96).

The majority of Afghans in the U.S. arrived as part of the first wave of exodus between 1981 and 1990 (about 23,000), which included mostly urbanized elite. After the fall of the Soviets, many Afghans from neighboring countries returned home. Yet, between 1995 and 2000, as the Taliban took over, many left again, creating a smaller second wave of an exodus. Afghans' internal and external migration fluctuates based on conflict, labor, natural disasters, and poverty. The next significant wave occurred in 2001 after the U.S. invaded Afghanistan. Between 2001 and 2016, amidst the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan, the U.S. resettled 143,650 Iraqi refugees but only 29,688 Afghans (Micinski 2018; Crews 2016; Komar 2018). Each year only a small number of Afghans qualify for special visas for working with U.S. forces, however even these refugees were denied admission with the 2017 Executive Order known as the Muslim ban (Watson 2017; BBC.com).

While the 2019 American Community Survey based on the U.S. Census registered 144,661 people with Afghan ancestry, other sources suggest the number of Afghans has increased to around 300,000 people (Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington D.C. as cited in Marchand et al. 2014). California is home to the greatest number of Afghan refugees, where they comprise about 0.12 percent of the state's

large population (United States Census Bureau 2017). This study examines the experiences of 1.5 and second-generation Afghans who outnumber the foreign-born adult refugees in California (United States Census Bureau 2017) and are growing up post-9/11 climate that conflate their background and religion with terrorism (Maira 2016).

Methods

This paper's findings draw from 38 participants and 43 semi-structured interviews conducted in the 2015-2016 and 2019-2020 academic school years with 1.5- and second-generation Afghan American Muslims, most of whom resided in California. Participants ranged in age from 19-31. More information about my sample can be found in Table 1. I gained access to this community through direct and indirect networks I had as a second-generation Afghan American. Given the ongoing state surveillance they may experience, I used snowball sampling to establish trust among this community. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Due to geographic spread and scheduling difficulties, I conducted 23 out of 43 interviews on Zoom or the phone. Seven interviews were follow-up interviews. Two participants did not want to be recorded during the interview, so I transcribed their responses during the in-person meeting to the best of my ability. The conversations lasted one to two hours. After my initial 20 interviews, between 2015-2016, I increased the sample size and range of participant experiences. through the addition of 16 new interviews between 2019-2020 and seven follow-up interviews. Using

NVivo qualitative software, I analyzed transcribed interviews by first coding for broad patterns across interviews using grounded theory to identify emerging themes (Saldana 2012; Strauss and Corbin 1997). I then applied structural coding to identify areas where Afghans discussed experiences with identity and racialization (Saldana 2012:84). Next, I developed thematic networks and synthesized them into global themes, derived from a systematic analysis of the relationships, processes, concepts, ideas, and tensions that each network represented (Miles and Huberman 1994).

NAVIGATING ANTI-MUSLIM ETHNORACISM

Based on my interview analysis, I argue that ethnonational, diasporic, and refugee identities not only contribute to the racializing of Muslim Americans (in addition to their religious identities through similar tropes related to the War on Terror), but they also shape how Muslims may respond and resist their racialization. My argument builds on three analytical points. First, Afghans experience racialization due to tropes that racialize their religion and ethnic origins with terrorism; this process renders them as ghosts, hypervisible as terrorists but invisible as Afghan American subjects. Second, Afghans' politicized and racialized refugee identities produce hauntings that result in feelings of multiple homeland insecurities and self-surveillance practices. Third, Afghans' hauntings arise in their strategic use of their diasporic identities to counter deficient discourses through cultural transformation.

Racialized Haunting and Afghans' Hyper(In)Visibility

Afghans experience racialized haunting as their Afghan and Muslim identities become hyper(in)visible. In other words, Afghans experience hypervisibility in association with stereotypes that characterize their ethnonational and religious identities with terrorism and being "backward" and uncivilized beings that are foreign and dangerous. They also experience hyper- invisibility as Afghan Americans born and raised in the U.S. due to historical and ongoing U.S. intervention in their homeland. These two types of experiences combine to create a racialized haunting. For example, Nadir, a second-generation, 19-year-old Afghan American man, shares how growing up in public high school in California, his Afghan identity was only visible to his peers through stereotypes:

Every time I brought up Afghan culture, they didn't know anything about it. They knew drugs associated with it, terrorism, Al Qaeda, Taliban—all these negative words. I want to show them the good side of the culture, what it's really about. I'd like them to know my language.

As Nadir expresses in this quotation, Afghans shared that in addition to the everyday experiences of racialization where people associated them with terrorism, they also felt Othered by the lack of knowledge, even in educational settings, about their distinct cultural and linguistic histories despite the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Education scholar Allen Luke (1995) calls this experience extreme "namelessness," the hypervisible dangerous, and deficient portrayals' flip side.

Racialized haunting for Afghan men and women manifested through harassment and the frequent association with terrorists due to their Muslim and Afghan identities. For example, Afsana, age 23, a fair-skinned Afghan woman,

shares, "[In high school] this guy was racist. I remember I always wore this big jacket during my freshman year, and he was like, 'Oh, are there bombs in there?' He didn't know I was Muslim. All he knew was that I was Afghan." Afsana shares her high school experience to differentiate between her time as a community college student when she began to wear the hijab. She expresses how she felt racialized for being Afghan and Muslim before becoming visibly Muslim with the veil. Afsana's experience suggests that both her Afghan and Muslim identities conflate under the trope of the "bad/terrorist/Muslim figure," which crosses gender boundaries despite often being read as masculine (Mamdani 2005; Selod 2018). In other words, though the literature associates Muslim men as typical targets of the terrorist trope, in practice, Afghan and Muslim women are also rendered as suspected terrorists in relation to their nationalities and religious identities (Razack 2008; Zine 2007).

In another example, Ariana, age 21, had a similar experience to Afsana when she was a high school freshman. She reflects, "I remember in high school...I was riding the bus, and someone asked me where I'm from, and I told them I'm Afghan, and this guy turns around on the bus, someone younger, just like a kid, and he turns around and says, 'Oh my god, you're a terrorist!'" Here, like Afsana, Ariana shares an experience where she felt that her Afghan identity—specifically its connection to war and terrorism—prompted her racialization. Though Afsana was a few years older than Ariana when 9/11 occurred, both grew up amidst the War on Terror and early stages of the war in Afghanistan. Ariana explains that because both her ethnic and religious identities are associated with war, she feels the tension, or the racialized haunting,

around them since they prompt racist interactions. Her observation points to the importance of what Grosfoguel and Georas (2000) term the "colonial matrix of domination" to understand how subjects from certain countries and geopolitical areas with colonial/imperial ties are more likely to be racialized.

Yet, most 1.5- and second-generation Afghan Americans never experienced Afghanistan or were very young when they arrived with their parents. This condition suggests Afghans' claims to their diasporic identity in the U.S. are political and implicates them in the colonial matrix of domination in a way that differs from other Muslim Americans. These accounts show how racialized hauntings of the "Muslim-terrorist suspect" figure manifests regardless of gender differences or racial modality.

In addition to these experiences of being rendered hyper(in)visible as "terror suspects," Afghans expressed feeling invisible due to perceptions of foreignness and premodern culture. Invisibility and historical silences become essential tools for producing U.S. exceptionalism and benevolence amidst historical and contemporary imperial relationships between U.S. and Afghanistan (Maira 2009; Said 1979). These discourses relieve empire from its responsibility and map violence and terrorism on subjects of war (Espiritu 2006; Maira 2009). In this regard, hypervisibility and invisibility operate together to racialize Afghans as foreign subjects that belong outside of the U.S. Afghans' racialized hauntings appear among Afghans' interactions with strangers when Afghans present themselves in the U.S. as anything other than

tropes. Take Bilal's experience as a second-generation Afghan with medium-tan skin tone:

I've heard, "You don't look Afghan to me." I'm like, "What does an Afghan look like to you?" What I often take from when people say that—I may be dressed nicely—is that they have such low expectations that they see someone put together and not a slob and not a huge giant beard, and like wearing Afghan clothes or a turban, they're like, "*Oh!* I didn't know that you're Afghan."

Bilal's interpretation of the event reveals how people cast Afghans as non-modern beings that practice culture and religion to an extreme (i.e., giant beard, only wearing traditional clothes). The image of Afghan Americans, as Afghans that belong in America, does not exist in their minds. Similarly, in Nadir's account, the element of surprise reveals the ways racialized haunting of the Afghan body renders it invisible within American borders.

Sometimes people have this perception of what I am, and when I tell them I'm Afghan, they aren't shocked, but they're, like, *amazed*, either because they never heard of Afghan or because they're not too many Afghans around from where they are from.

Nadir is right that Afghans are a minority in the U.S., and therefore it is unlikely many Americans interact with any Afghan Americans directly. However, the fact that the U.S. has been at war in Afghanistan for two decades and many Americans never hear of Afghans points to Afghan subjects' imperial erasure from the American consciousness. Afghans' spectacle in America demonstrates how Afghans are racialized as foreigners, imagined only as the geopolitical Other (Said 1979).

This section illustrates how Afghans' experiences with hyper(in)visibility as terrorists and foreign subjects result from racialized hauntings from their religious and ethnonational identities. I highlight how Afghans' ethnic and diasporic identities conflate with their religion when associated with terrorism due to the War on Terror racialization (Selod and Embrick 2013). Afghan Americans experienced racialization as the abundance of stereotypes and the absence of counter-discourses that could correct and compete with negative portrayals and imperial justifications for war. In this way, invisibility also racializes Afghans. According to Stuart Hall, stereotypes "occur where there are gross inequalities of power" and provide information on the social order, such as who belongs and who does not belong as part of the nation-state (1997: 258). Afghans' imperial erasure in the U.S., accompanied by their inclusion as dehumanized terrorist figures, points to how power operates through invisibility and hypervisibility. Afghans are invisible as "Afghan Americans" who were born and belong in the United States. Afghans only become visible as violent terrorist-others in places geographically removed from the U.S., thus rendering them as ghosts in their current homeland. As in Nadir and Bilal's case, when Afghans were present or recognized, they became spectacles, another indication of their ghostly presence and the haunting produced by racialization. The next section examines how Afghans' experiences with racialized haunting led them to navigate multiple "homeland insecurities" (Cainkar 2009).

Self-Surveillance Amidst Multiple Homeland Insecurities

Studies describe how Muslims counter-surveil or self-surveil in response to their religious racialization as suspect citizens (Maira 2016; Selod 2018). Afghans' experiences in this study demonstrated that their self-imposed surveillance acts were intensified due to racialized hauntings of their refugee backgrounds that induced feelings of *multiple homeland insecurities* (violence against them in the United States and Afghanistan). Afghans were encouraged by their refugee parents to ethnically and religiously "pass" or "lay low" from discussing politics to avoid persecution similar to Palestinian youth (Abu El-Haj 2015). For example, Aziza, a light-skinned second-generation, 22-year-old Afghan woman, had no problem sharing her identity when in college, but she felt cautious in high school. She explains: "Nine-eleven had just happened. I remember...I think my dad told me not to talk about [politics]. 'Keep it to yourself.' Maybe that's what scared me off; he said, 'Don't talk about it in school.'" Parents would often advise their children not to talk about politics in school to protect them. Afghan parents' admonition reveals their perceptions of schools as political places that house state agents. The parents of 1.5 and second-generation Afghans were political refugees, escaping political persecution from the Soviet Union during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) and violence from the Taliban in the '90s. Laying low and not discussing politics were survival strategies when the Soviet Union persecuted non-communist Afghans in their homeland. These intergenerational racialized hauntings manifest through self-surveillance and the awareness of multiple homeland insecurities that are not immediately visible and derive from imperial interventions before the War on Terror. For instance, Aziza expresses her identity and

political ideas openly when asked. Still, her hesitation in the next excerpt demonstrates how she continues to feel haunted by her and her father's racialization experiences. When I ask her about her perceptions of the War on Terror, she states:

War on Terror? Huh. Well, I think it's something—well, this is being recorded! I don't care. I think the USA and Israel have created it themselves; that's what we all think, they created it themselves, and the War on Terror is an ideological war.

Aziza initially hesitates because, growing up, her dad advised her against engaging in politics. Aziza's declaration that she does not care if the interview is being recorded is perhaps an affirmation to resist her tendency to self-surveil or her comfort with sharing her opinions with another Afghan. It also shows the endurance of racialized hauntings. While Aziza enjoyed discussing her political views, Layma did not. Layma's recognition that her ethnic and religious identities are politicized stems from how her parents deterred her from sharing them after 9/11. Layma, 20, a tan-skinned, second-generation Afghan woman, recalls:

At the time in 2001, as a child, my parents didn't know how it [9/11] would affect us, so they said, 'Don't say you're Muslim. Unless people ask, just don't bring it up. Or if people say you're Afghan, don't say you're Afghan. Say you're American because you are.' I remember my mom was like, 'You're raised here, you were born here, so you're American. Don't let anyone try to ask you or anything.' But that was just like the few years following it. Now I don't care. I don't think anyone cares anymore. I just say I'm Afghan, and I'm Muslim.

Following 9/11, Layma's refugee parents attempted to counter their multiple homeland insecurities by advising their daughter to express her patriotism and identify outright as American. Though Layma initially complied, now as a college student, she feels more inclined to express her identity under the assumption that "no

one cares." She also acknowledges that most people do not ask her about her background and assume she is Indian or Mexican because of her tan skin tone. However, she still self-governs her actions in certain circumstances by avoiding conversations on her cultural and religious backgrounds. When Layma does divulge her identities, she is cautious with how she explains her beliefs so others do not assume she is oppressed. In this way, Afghans' ethnonational and refugee identities intensify their self-imposed surveillance as Muslims as they experience racialized hauntings from the War on Terror and sociopolitical contexts of their parents' refuge amidst the Soviet-Afghan War.

Ibrahim, age 28, a second-generation Afghan man who self-identifies as "ambiguously brown," recalls that 9/11 happened on his second day of high school. Despite his parents' wishes to "stay low" and forego identifying openly as Afghan, Ibrahim's frustration from being judged "pushed" him more towards his ethnonational identity. He states, "[My parents] wanted me to disassociate myself even more [from identifying as Afghan] because they were so afraid that I would get beat up or something." Like the cases above, Ibrahim's experience shows how second-generation Afghans and their parents feel deeply that their ethnonational identities, in addition to their religious identities, identify them as potential targets of violence. To protect their children from persecution in their new homeland, many parents encouraged them to take advantage of their racial ambiguity and pass as another identity to blend in with American society. Though the second-generation did not directly experience persecution from the Soviets or the Taliban, their parents' sociopolitical histories

informed and intensified their feelings of insecurity in the U.S. and their subsequent decisions to self-surveil. For instance, Gul, a second-generation, 24-year-old Afghan woman who was one of two participants who did not wish to be recorded, explains:

Even today [16 years after September 11th, 2001], even if you see it as a joke, they are listening to us no matter what. Yes, we were born here. We feel safe, but Muslims, or Afghans, or any minority group, I don't think they can ever fully be safe. Even in Farsi, I am careful with what I say. It opens your eyes, not feeling safe in the country you were born in.

Gul acknowledges the relative safety she feels being a U.S.-born citizen. Yet, she questions whether Afghans, Muslims, or any other minority group can ever "fully" be safe. She alludes to how, as an Afghan and Muslim person, the state renders her a "suspect" regardless of her citizenship status. Many participants also referenced how their self-surveillance was informed by their parents' desires to keep them safe. While subject to multiple homeland insecurities, participants navigated their parents' hauntings differently, and racial and ethnic passing was not available to every participant.

This section demonstrates how racialized hauntings emerge from multiple homeland insecurities that Afghans feel as refugee subjects who are also racialized for their religion. Afghans mitigate their racialization and surveillance experiences with self-surveillance (Ali 2016; Maira 2016; Selod 2018). For Afghan Americans in particular, multiple homeland insecurities stemmed from being haunted as the children of refugees growing up amidst the War on Terror. I demonstrate how racialized hauntings encourage Afghans' self-surveillance practices amidst personal and political expressions relating to their ethnonational identities as much as their

religion. In the next section, I describe how racialized hauntings produce the need for "something to be done" (Gordon 2008:194). For Afghans, this means using their ethnonational identities as sources of pride, resilience, and resistance against racialization.

Bringing the Best of Multiple Worlds: Afghans' Cultural Survivance

Racialized hauntings shape both racialization and its responses. While Afghans' multiple worlds resulted in feelings of multiple homeland insecurities and self-surveillance, the racialized haunting it produced also encouraged "cultural survivance." Survivance, coined by indigenous scholar Gerald Vizenor (1994), describes indigenous self-expression, usually through stories, amidst settler colonialism's persistence and erasure. Survivance is distinct from survival: it is "moving beyond our basic survival in the face of overwhelming cultural genocide to create spaces of synthesis and renewal" (1994: 53). I adapt survivance to this context to refer to how Afghans resist historical silences and erasure amidst the racialized hauntings of cultural and military imperialism perpetuated by U.S. Cold Wars and the War on Terror.

For example, Qais shares, when 9/11 had just occurred, a girl approached Qais to ask him if he was Afghan. Qais looked at her and walked away, refusing to engage her in a conversation he knew would take a turn towards him, dissociating from harmful tropes about his culture. In the context of cultural imperialism wherein Afghans are perceived to be dangerous and culturally deficient, Afghans' pride and

refusals can be understood as a form of survivance (i.e., resistance and survival) (Vizenor 2008). Now a college graduate and working full-time, Qais explains that he often does helpful things at work, like connecting people or taking care of their overloaded cases, because of his understanding of what it means to be Afghan. He states, "When I do something helpful, I let them know it's because I'm Afghan." He shares his values with those he helps to produce an alternative narrative of Afghanness in public discourse. His actions demonstrate a form of cultural survivance, informed by his ethnonational background's racialized hauntings. He uses his Afghan values to resist erasure from racialization while generating new cultural narratives.

Like Qais, Jawed shared that his actions of resisting racialization often stem from a sense of pride and understanding of what it means to be Afghan. For example, Jawed shares,

I do take a lot of pride in being Afghan. Having an Afghan family means a lot of history, a lot of rich tradition, culture...a lot of laughter, and a lot of toughness because of all the history we've gone through.

The history of what "we've gone through" included a transnational sensibility of not only what their parents' homeland has gone through but also what participants' parents experienced when fleeing war to get to the U.S. Despite being cast as Muslim-outsiders post 9/11, these accounts show how 1.5 and second-generation Afghans made efforts to bring these worlds together. Amidst the negative stereotypes, Jawed associates his diasporic identity with joy, community, and resilience and thus

uses it as a source of affirmation, demonstrating how racialized hauntings also encourage counter-responses to racialization.

Afghans are committed to creating and inaugurating new cultural visions of what it means to be Afghan, rather than reacting to cultural essentialism and stereotypes. Ibrahim, age 28, articulates what it means to have a hybrid Afghan American identity: "I think it's a patchwork, you pick and choose what you agree with or what resonates with you, and then you discard what doesn't." Here, Ibrahim reflects on his identity as something like a "patchwork" that he consciously creates by choosing what "resonates" with him from both cultures. He creates a new identity facilitated by an evaluation or consciousness of what he does not necessarily "jive" with. As Gordon (2011) mentions, the transformation induced by a haunting seeks "a measure of independence from immediate crises and from the terms in which these crises are made and given" (Gordon 2011:2). This reflective process demonstrates agency among participants as they self-author themselves despite societal discourses that may position them as irrational followers of ideology (Bakhtin 1981).

Indeed, when enacting cultural survivance, Afghan youth were not blindly prideful about their culture. They were very specific about bringing together "the best of both worlds" to produce new cultural forms in response to racialized hauntings. For example, Aziza, age 22, shares "the good aspects [of being Afghan] are family values, warmth, welcomeness, Afghan hospitality, the food, [and] keeping the history." On the other side, it was common among both men and women to name

patriarchy and racism as the "biggest thing[s] we need to leave." In this process of articulating the "good and the bad," Afghans produced a cultural consciousness to improve themselves by addressing the systemic violence that affects their communities.

For instance, Qais explains how Islam is more open-minded than either Afghan or American culture. He suggests, "I think we are getting more educated though, more liberal, maybe...and maybe the next generation can rectify the problem [of racism]. It's not Islamic, but [it is part of] Afghan [culture]... Islam judges people by faith, not the color of skin... Our generation is changing." Here, Qais calls upon Islam's principles to transform his culture into something more progressive that does not discriminate against people based on their skin color. Afghans perceived culture as something flexible that changes based on morals derived from religion (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). Afghans' emphasis on their culture's malleability served to contradict essentialist depictions that associated it with stereotypical tropes.

Similarly, Layma, age 20, thinks critically about the elements she wants to retain and pass on while identifying the patriarchy as something she wishes to leave behind. She states,

The culture, there's certain stuff I wouldn't keep—like the bad aspects of it, like how guys treat their wives...but like family and food, and being just really strong in religion, I would keep.

Like others, Layma conceives culture as fluid, malleable, and transformed with each generation. In narrating their interest to pass down their culture, Afghans in this study

created new imaginaries of what their culture would look like and questioned inherent practices that reinforced patriarchy and racism in Afghan and American cultures. Afghans' hybridity as diasporic subjects enabled them to reimagine, reconfigure, and assess culture from multiple perspectives or positionalities to create what they felt was the best possible version (Gordon 2008; Hall 1997; Sadat 2008).

Many of the Afghan Americans in this study echoed these sentiments by taking pride in their background and expressing desires to learn the history, retain the language, and practice the "good" elements of the culture. Given the ongoing U.S. war in Afghanistan, and because Afghans are a minority in the U.S. and even within the Muslim community, it can get "annoying" when Afghans find themselves depicted through gendered tropes that associate them with being "terrorists" or "oppressed women" (Helai), in these cases, Afghans demonstrate cultural survivance by expressing their identity amidst conditions of hyper(in)visibility.

This section explains how Afghan Americans' racialized hauntings encourage cultural survivance amidst imperial erasure and racialization. Afghans draw upon their hybridized diasporic identities (Sadat 2008) rather than Muslim identities to enact cultural "survivance" (Vizenor 1994) because of imperial racializations that overlook their ethnonational and refugee backgrounds. Their focus on ethnicity demonstrates how diaspora serves as a "tool for self-determinism, that is vital for a positive self-conception in a racialized society" (Vue 2013:19) to counter-pose deficient and essentialized figures. Their emphasis on cultural malleability shows

how they mold ethnicity to build agentic capabilities to strategically produce and reproduce themselves anew amidst their racialization and erasure as U.S. imperial subjects (Hall 1997; Bakhtin 1981).

DISCUSSION

“To be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects” (Gordon 2008:190)

Today Afghans are not only being displaced within Afghanistan, but Afghan refugees who previously found temporary homes in parts of Europe, Iran, Pakistan, and India are being forcibly returned to unsafe conditions, a violation of global human rights (UNHCR 2016). Though Afghanistan was not listed in President Trump's 2017 Muslim Ban that banned refugee admissions from seven majority-Muslim countries, Afghans were still detained at airports, including those who worked with American troops (Watson 2017). The ongoing War on Terror relies on perceptions of Afghans and Muslims as terrorists and dangerous figures who deserve to be banned, extremely vetted, and surveilled if admitted (Gowayed 2020). This paper illustrates how Afghans in the U.S. experience racialization amidst these ongoing sociopolitical and imperial contexts. These findings have theoretical and empirical implications.

First, I argue for a conceptual reframing of anti-Muslim racism to anti-Muslim ethnoracism, which accounts for the ways that ethno-national, refugee, and colonial contexts underpin the racialization processes of Muslims in addition to their religious identities. Hence, I build on prior studies of ethnoracism (Arando and Rebello-Gil

2004) and anti-Muslim racism (Selod 2018; Cainkar 2009) to broaden and nuance the racializing experiences of Muslims. One mechanism by which anti-Muslim ethnoracism becomes apparent is what I call *racialized hauntings*, which refers to how respondents in this study experience stereotypes and tropes tied to their visible identities and the invisible effects of the imperial contexts of their refugee backgrounds. I apply Avery Gordon's theory of haunting, which investigates historical and social effects of a phenomenon, to racialized contexts of refuge to highlight the ways that colonial and imperial logics pervade across homelands and racializing circumstances. Afghans' ethnonational and refugee backgrounds result in racialized hauntings because of how it intensifies their hyper(in)visibility, inclinations to self-surveil, and desires for counteracting racialization through cultural survivance. By examining racialized hauntings, studies can extend anti-Muslim racism to explicitly interrogate the effects of ethnoracism and imperial racialization in different Muslim subjects' everyday life experiences.

Second, through the concept of racialized hauntings, I challenge theories that suggest self-surveillance and counter-surveillance practices emerge only in the post-9/11 context around Muslimness. Rather, I show that while 9/11 may have been a critical moment that spurred self-surveillance for Muslims given the salience of a collective targeted Muslim identity (Peek 2005), Afghans had deeper roots that shaped decisions to surveil, including, for example, migrants' refugee backgrounds or their contentious context of exit from prior homelands. Thus, I nuanced theories of counter-surveillance to show how self-governing practices were informed by more

than a “reactive religious identity” (Peek 2005). They also involve subjects’ transnational and migrant histories formed in the context of multiple homeland insecurities. In this way, a focus on racialized hauntings offers a lens into the sociopolitical context of migration and the imperial ties that continue to shape responses and experiences with racism across generations. I argue that Muslims’ imperial racialization does not begin in the U.S., but rather it begins in the discourses that justify U.S. intervention in their homelands, which created the conditions under which they have to move across borders (Kim 2008; Gawayed 2020). These insights challenge immigrant incorporation theories to consider a global approach that accounts for context of exit in addition to reception (Portes and Rumbaut 2014).

Third, this paper builds on critical refugee studies to counter framings of Afghans in the literature as deficient refugee victims. I explain through racialized hauntings that Afghans demonstrate agency amidst their racializing experiences by enacting cultural survivance. Rather than focus on trauma like other studies on refugees this study shifts the gaze of analysis to state mechanisms such as racialization and shows how the community expresses their agency amidst racial encounters. In particular, Afghans’ racializing experiences and cultural survivance practices demonstrate the need for more literature that accounts for the reasons behind the trauma, such as racial and imperial logics and community responses and resistance amidst them (Espiritu 2017). This study complicates depictions of Afghans as “good refugees” and grateful recipients of U.S. involvement by illuminating how they continue to be racialized within the U.S. as dangerous Muslim subjects and

illegible American subjects. Their racial illegibility and recognition produce a ghostly effect making it difficult to claim access to discursive, political material belonging to any particular homeland.

Additionally, this study argues against assimilationist theories suggesting that Middle Eastern and North Africans (Central Asians included) will become White and their ethnic and religious identities -symbolic. 1.5 and second-generation Afghans' practices of asserting their ethnonational identities are tied to resisting U.S. imperialism, suggesting that political and material conditions also shape racial and ethnic identification. While some White European ethnic groups may be able to move beyond ethnonational identities towards achieving inclusion through Whiteness, I argue that Afghans' racial experiences suggest that as long as U.S. imperial involvement and its consequences pervade, then Afghans will continue to assert their ethnonational identities and reject aspirational Whiteness. Future studies may consider how class and length of time in the U.S. shapes racial identity formation amidst the influx of new Afghan refugees that may create replenished ethnicities over time (Jiménez 2010).

Finally, this paper's findings suggest examining anti-Muslim ethnoracism captures nuances of Muslim racialization regarding subjects' particular migration patterns and contexts of exit. While some Muslim subgroups' religious identities may have become the most salient facet of their racialization, this study demonstrates that this is not the case for all Muslims when there are competing racial projects. This

research has implications for the study of inter-ethnic and intra-religious racialization as it suggests that particularities may exist within religious subgroups, which produce different experiences with racialization and U.S. imperialism (Espiritu 2006).

Findings also demonstrate that ethnicity and religion produce external and internalized boundaries to integration.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *anti-Muslim ethnoracism* contributes to our understanding of the effect of ethnonational, migrant, and imperial relations on Muslims' particular experiences with U.S. discrimination and their responses to it. Through the case of Afghan-Americans, this paper documents the consequences of U.S. racial and imperial logics and how Muslims' particular ethnonational, refugee and imperial histories are embedded with race and religion. Examining the racialization of different Muslim American diasporic subgroups enables an understanding of the nuanced ways that anti-Muslim racism manifests in everyday life that sustain empire across borders and generations. Future studies should examine whether racialized haunting manifests differently for Afghans from different socioeconomic backgrounds who did not attend college to account for the ways that college facilitated identity development and consciousness. The research frame used here should also be applied to Muslim and "Muslim perceived" communities such as Iranians and Arabs from a broad geographic scale to build comparative racial analysis

and understand how specific racial and imperial contexts produce similar or divergent pathways of racialization.

CHAPTER 5

AFGHANS OUTSIDE THE RACIAL BOX:

MAKING SENSE OF RACE AND CITIZENSHIP

Abstract. This paper draws on theories of racial formation and cultural citizenship to examine interviews with 1.5- and second-generation Afghan Americans and how they experience racial liminality and belonging in an American racialized society. I argue that Afghans reject Whiteness and Middle Eastern North African (MENA) because it renders them illegible and reinforces imperial erasure and racial degradation (by not acknowledging their existence amidst ongoing violence in their homeland). I further argue that Afghans' racial proximity to Whiteness can sometimes hinder their coalitional politics, especially if they benefit from white privilege. These findings present the limitations of a MENA category to produce racial and political belonging, given its colonial roots and current connotations with Whiteness. Finally, these racial configurations have implications for understanding Muslims' complex nationalisms and belonging.

Race is so deeply embedded in the construction of U.S. society that, according to sociologists Omi and Winant, for some, "to be without racial identity is to be in danger of having no identity." In contrast, for Whites, colorblindness and elusive definitions of Whiteness serve as a source of invisible privilege and power over racialized groups ([1994] 2014: 6). The inclusion of non-Europeans into U.S. society

has historically and continues to be based on the Black/White hierarchy that upholds White supremacy over Blackness. The U.S. government and courts did not always know how to incorporate new racial categories, and the introduction of Chinese and Mexicans created some categorical confusion (e.g., Chinese initially being labeled as Black and Mexicans as White). Some scholars offer terms such as "honorary Whites" and "collective Blacks" to explain the social experiences of "in-between" who are neither White nor Black (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Dhingra 2003).

Through the 21st century, some sociologists continued to categorize Middle Eastern immigrants through the designation of "honorary Whites," under the assumption that they would eventually become White with full social rights because of their socioeconomic capital and mobility (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Alba et al. 2009). However, Middle Eastern North Africans (MENA) are already categorized as White by the U.S. government and have access to White legal status. While historically many Syrians petitioned the U.S. government to be included in Whiteness to obtain citizenship rights, since the late 20th century, many Middle Easterners in the U.S. reject their conflation with Whiteness because of ongoing social and racial ostracism due to the U.S. imperial interests in West, Central Asia and North Africa (Balkian 2009, Abraham 1994; Salaita 2006). For example, among Iranian and Arabs, studies have shown that the second generation is more likely to identify as "brown" rather than aspire towards Whiteness compared to the first generation (Maghbouleh 2017). While anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments stem earlier than 9/11, the ways that Arabs/Muslims/Middle Easterners/South Asians and North Africans have all been

conflated and associated with terrorism became widespread and normalized after 9/11. Since then, scholarship has articulated how the Muslim figure and the racialization of Muslims and Muslim perceived peoples are based on multiple axes of domination (Grosfogel and Georas 2000; Collins 2000), including biology, culture, ideology, and geography, and colonialism. These experiences with racialization and racism have moved many Middle Eastern or West Asians and North Africans away from honorary Whiteness and toward a distinct MENA category.

This paper draws on the theoretical framing of anti-Muslim ethnoracism to understand how Afghans, a central Asian subgroup of "Middle Eastern North Africans," subjectively understand their race and citizenship in relation to their state designation as White. Anti-Muslim ethnoracism (Nojan, forthcoming) suggests that ethnicity, refugee backgrounds, and imperial contexts of exit likely interact with anti-Muslim racism when racializing subjects. Among studies that have examined racial mismatch between state racial assignments and subjective racial experiences (Roth 2016; Saperstein and Penner 2014), few have considered the racialization of religion, and none have examined the racial subjectivities of Afghan Americans in particular as a central Asian subgroup lumped with other MENA peoples. This paper addresses this gap to examine how Afghans make meaning of their racialization in relation to state designations.

The ongoing U.S. imperial interests in Central Asia, primarily Afghanistan, present a theoretically interesting case for examining the relationship between race,

imperialism, and cultural citizenship. The U.S. war in Afghanistan is the longest war in the history of the United States. Afghanistan has also played an essential role in the War on Terror (WOT)'s geopolitical spatial imaginary as the site of Osama bin Laden's encampment, the location of oppressed Muslim women that "need saving," and the site of the U.S. imperial and capitalistic ambitions of creating a central Asian oil pipeline (Mamandi 2004). As a result of ongoing foreign interventions, Afghans make up one of the world's largest refugee communities in the world (after Syrians), but only a tiny fraction of these refugees live in the U.S., mostly having arrived through the 1980 Refugee Act that enabled them a pathway to formal citizenship. Newer Afghan arrivals post 9/11 are highly vetted and limited to Afghans who worked with U.S. special forces in the homeland (Crews 2014). Afghans' racial experiences will likely be informed by their refugee backgrounds and the imperial context of Afghan-U.S. relations (Nojan, forthcoming; Maira 2016).

In this study, I draw on interviews with 1.5 and second-generation Afghans to argue that Afghans' racial and imperial subjectivities shape integration experiences and the ways in which racial and national identities are adopted or resisted. I find that the confluences between American identity and Whiteness made both categories unavailable for Afghan participants. The resistance to both Whiteness and Americanness critiques the "honorary White" category as it seems to require a "good Muslim" mentality and erases the culture and heritage that 1.5 and second-generation Afghans value. Afghans' contested cultural citizenship and racial non-belonging have implications for their legal citizenship and may produce a third-world consciousness

that encourages their identification with POC (Cordoba 2005). While POC was an identity that Afghans considered a viable mode of inclusion into American belonging, MENA did not hold the same perceptions for the participants.

These findings offer multiple contributions to existing scholarship. First, they challenge existing sociological theories of assimilation and “honorary whiteness” that assume the social desirability of Whiteness. I also expand the literature on racialization by providing an empirical case of how racial identification is interpreted and taken up for an overlooked MENA subgroup (Central Asians), primarily refugees and neither White nor Black. These findings have implications for an expanded racial naturalization theory that considers how imperial subjectivities may shape integration into an American identity even as an excluded group. These findings present the limitations of a MENA category to produce racial and political belonging, given its colonial roots and current connotations with Whiteness. Finally, these racial configurations have implications for understanding Muslims and refugees’ complex nationalisms and belonging and the possibilities for coalitional identification. In the following section, I review the relevant historical and empirical theories on racial formations, the shifting nature of Whiteness, and cultural citizenship in a racialized society.

RACIALIZATION AND ASSIMILATION

The premise of racial formation theory is that race consists of unstable and complex social meanings based on dynamic relationships between macro, meso, and

micro dimensions. This means that studying race and processes of racialization are rife with “paradox, irony and danger” (Omi & Winant 1994; LaBennett and Pulido, 2012:1) as it shifts over different sociopolitical historical moments. Racialization, an ideological and historically specific process, refers to the “extension of racial meaning to a previously unclassified relationship, social practice or group,” that accounts for the ways that racial stereotypes and categories emerge, disappear, and are transformed (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Omi & Winant 2014:111). According to racial formation theory, the racial state and racial classifications do not shift without conflict; however, many immigrant assimilation theorists suggest otherwise.

Early assimilationist theories based on the integration experiences of Southern and Eastern European immigrants from Jewish and Catholic backgrounds suggested that, over generations, immigrants shed their ethnic and religious identities to eventually become “White” (Gordon 1964). These theories suggested that religion and ethnicity would become symbolic barriers to integration (Gordon 1964; Waters 1990). However, ethnicity plays a different role among nonwhite immigrant integration experiences (Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Waters 2010). For example, for Black Caribbean immigrants, ethnicity may manifest as a reactive identity to reject American identification in the face of U.S. racism (Waters 1990, 2010). Among Latinx immigrants, scholars have argued that the continued influx of migration and multicultural ideologies can produce “replenished ethnicities” to conserve ethnic boundaries between the ethnic group and others (Jimenez 2010). The role of ethnicity takes different forms depending on structural contexts of integration and U.S. racial

hierarchies (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). New assimilationist theories suggest that American multiculturalism facilitates the integration of immigrants without the shedding of their identities as they become part of the American cultural pluralism.

New assimilationist frameworks suggest that Arab Americans and Muslims, like Jews, because of their economic mobility, operate as "honorary Whites" and would also become a part of American mainstream pluralism, even if they initially experienced a trial period of discrimination (Alba et al. 2009; Bonilla-Silva 2004). However, these theories are limited in explaining the experiences of Arab and other Middle Eastern and North African peoples because they are already categorized as white, and they continue to experience high because of their perceived racial, geopolitical, national, and religious backgrounds that mark them as dangerous and terror suspects (CAIR 2017; Love 2017; Cainkar and Selod 2018). Instead, a framework that considers colonial and imperial racialization may be better suited, such as anti-Muslim ethnoracism. Anti-Muslim ethnoracism accounts for the ways that ethno-national, refugee, and colonial contexts underpin the racialization processes of Muslims in addition to their religious identities (Nojan, forthcoming). This framework can help illuminate the limitations of immigrant incorporation literature and theorize how Muslim migrants and, in particular, refugees will be incorporated into U.S. society from Muslim-majority countries who experience multiple axes of discrimination, including geography, nationality, religion, ethnicity, and ongoing state imperial projects. For example, the Cold War marked a high point in which Arab Americans experienced the highest levels of anti-Arab racism (before

the War on Terror). From March 1985 through June 1986, Arab Americans experienced an intense period of "Anti-Arab hysteria" (Abraham 1994:177) because of the ongoing demonization of "the Arabs" as part of the Reagan administration's "war on international terrorism" (Abraham 1994:166). Despite pan-ethnic and Pan-Islamic movements during the Cold War era to establish pride amongst Arabs and Muslims, Abraham (1994) suggests that anti-Arab racism was often tolerated by mainstream society because of the ways that the "Arab world" was set up to be an "outcast world, with ancient habits" and innate dispositions to violence (Abraham 1994:160; Cainkar 1988).

For Arab Americans, discrimination and prejudice in their everyday interactions remain primarily invisible because they continue to be categorized as legally White, and "White on White racism" is not recognized in courts (Tehrani xx; Maghbouleh 2017). This legal invisibility affects other SWANA peoples, such as Iranians and Afghans, who are perceived as Arab and are also officially, legally Caucasian, but targeted everyday discrimination for their religious, national, and racial identities (Maghbouleh 2017). Even among White Muslim converts of European descent, scholars find that Muslim-identifying Whites have their White privilege revoked by other Whites and relegate them to lower levels of the civilizational hierarchy (Moosavi 2014). Today, many Iranian and Arab Americans prefer to identify as "brown" (Zopf 2015; Maghbouleh 2017) because of the widespread and varying instances of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism and

discrimination faced by these communities (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Bakhalian and Bergozour 2009; Maghbouleh, 2017; Zopf 2015).

Arabophobia has affected both Muslim and non-Muslim Arabs. However, Skyrock (2008) found Arab Americans self-reported their skin color to be shaped by their religious identities. Participants chose darker shades when part of a religious community that experienced discrimination, such as Muslims (Skyrock 2008). Muslim Arabs are presumed to experience more discrimination than Christian Arabs because of their "different" way of life, and their supposed "religious and tribal" commitments to other Muslims, such as Palestinians, over their fellow Americans (Abraham 1994; Cainkar 2008). This suggests that religion and phenotype may be interlocking with different dimensions of race to racialize specific "White" communities and shape their racial identifications.

Though these studies point towards a racial "browning" of these communities legally cast as White, more research is needed to understand how these communities find belonging to the proposed Middle Eastern North African (MENA) racial category the census that would separate them from Whiteness. After decades of advocacy and activism from the Arab American community, the Census Bureau had considered including a separate MENA racial category outside of Whiteness in the 2020 census. Advocates pointed out that MENA is not a race but rather an ethnic category that needs to be treated like Hispanic with options to mark different and multiple racial or ethnic categorizations. Advocates for this MENA category argue

that political and civil resources are at risk. At the same time, opponents fear that separation from Whiteness would mean increased surveillance of a community already considered suspect. While today Arab and other West Asian, Central Asian, and North African peoples resist their White designation, this was not always the case.

WHITENESS AND CITIZENSHIP

Historically, Christian Syrians and Muslim Arabs petitioned the government along with other early migrants from Central, South, and Western Asia to be considered White by the U.S. government to obtain citizenship rights. White racial designation meant access to material resources and elite social and economic status in the U.S. (Lipsitz 2006). Whiteness as a racial category emerged as a way to enable some (Anglo-Saxon protestant males) to purchase land under the Homestead Act and to prevent others (African Americans, Indians, European religious minorities, Chinese, and others) from this same right (Fukurai 2003). White and economic supremacy laid the foundation for civil and constitutional rights, such as American citizenship being afforded only "White property-owning males" (Fukurai 2003; Lipsitz 2006). East Asian and South Asian groups were denied admission to Whiteness; because of the ways that Chinese labor immigrants and other Asians were stereotyped as unassimilable and un-American under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1819. Afghans were amongst Asiatic groups that were initially categorized as nonwhite.

By the early 20th century, many groups from Europe and Asia petitioned the federal government to be included in the White racial designation to access these civil and material rights (e.g., Supreme court vs. Thind; Okinawa vs. Supreme Court). The Supreme Court drew on different definitions of race based on biological racism sometimes and common sense other times to distinguish who was considered White and nonwhite. In 1909 the courts ruled that Armenians previously understood as Asian Turks were included as White. While several court cases in federal and local courts ruled that Asian Indians and Syrians were not considered White, in some instances, Syrian Christians were able to be integrated into Whiteness when Muslim Syrians were not. Similarly, in 1928, a federal court in California ruled that Afghans are distinguishable from Whites under the logic of common sense. These examples demonstrate how race, religion, and economic interests were tied to decisions about Whiteness, citizenship, and, consequently, Americanness.

These discrepancies led Syrians and other Arabs to petition the U.S. government for White racial status and, by extension, citizenship rights based on a common nationality rather than religion. The ruling to characterize all Middle Eastern and North African people as White occurred at a crucial sociopolitical juncture. After WWII, the U.S. revised its policies in response to the atrocities committed in Germany based on the exclusion of people from the Aryan race. In 1978, the U.S. classified all persons from Europe (including previously excluded southeastern Europeans), the Middle East, and North Africa as White. The ruling occurred mere months before the Iranian Revolution (Maghbouleh 2017) and the Gulf Wars,

indicating a moment of "interest convergence" (Bell 1994) where the U.S. incorporated its domestic "enemies" into Whiteness to uphold its multicultural front as a racial democracy despite increased rates of anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-Iranian sentiments and hate crimes at the home front (Atanouski 2011; Abraham 1994; Salaita 2006). The contradictions of being included in Whiteness while experiencing increased racism and stereotypes of being "noncitizens" are captured by scholarship on cultural citizenship.

CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP AMONG THE LONG WAR ON TERROR

Cultural citizenship refers to the opportunities to exercise full citizenship rights that include membership, participation, and equality. As noncitizens become naturalized into formal citizenship, their racial, ethnic, and national origins determine whether and how they undergo "racial naturalization" and integrate into American identity as a dominant or subordinate group (Cordoba 2005; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Portes & Rumbaut 2014). Cordoba (2005) distinguishes between American citizenship and American identity, suggesting that American identity does not require American citizenship, and citizenship does not necessarily guarantee American identity.

The consequences of limited citizenship become dire during times of war when racialized subjects are positioned outside the bounds of national imagination (Abu- El-Haj, 2015). During World War II, the case of Japanese Americans offers a stark example: ongoing perceptions of Asians as perpetual foreigners led to

perceptions of Japanese American citizens as enemies within. These perceptions eventually led to forced internment and the stripping of Japanese Americans' legal citizenship, demonstrating that citizenship, cultural or legal, is a fluid construction created by the state to serve its racial and imperial projects. After 9/11, the Patriot Act and the Muslim registry program (i.e., NASEERS) legitimized surveilling and detaining "suspicious" Muslim Americans (Sheehi 2011; Cainkar 2009). Similar to how Japanese Americans were cast as perpetual foreigners, Muslims were cast as citizen suspects and perpetual suspects of terrorism.

One way that Muslims and Arabs have been stripped of their cultural citizenship rights is the right to dissent. In the post 9/11 and perpetual war climate of "belligerent nationalism" (Abu El-Haj 2015:172), Americans, including the American Muslim community, were called upon to express their uncritical patriotism and loyalty to the U.S. President Bush made distinctions between good Muslims as being "with us" and bad Muslims as those being "against us" (Mamandi 2005). In the climate of war and the WOT specifically, bad Muslims were defined as those that expressed dissent against war and U.S. military interventions. Good Muslims were defined as those who affirmed and legitimized U.S. benevolence through their humanitarian mission to "save" oppressed Muslim women in Afghanistan and elsewhere (Abu Lughod 2013; Maira 2009; Mamandi 2005).

While some Muslims embrace this patriotism in order to be included in the liberal multiculturalism as "good Muslims," others express their belonging and

citizenship through dissent and across transnational fields or communities (Abu El-Haj, 2015; Maira, 2009; Yukich 2018). Maira (2009) defines dissenting citizenship as standing apart from the dominant view in a nation and seeking inclusion within it. In her study of immigrant Muslim youth, Abu El-Haj (2015) finds that those more vulnerable to the state express their dissent in ambiguous and covert ways, imploring scholars to consider a continuum of dissent and responses of resistance. Similarly, a study of Palestinian Muslim youths belonging found that they expressed their dissent while making "everyday bids for citizenship" through their activism towards equality, justice, and inclusion" (Abu El-Haj 2015). Maira (2009) purports that political dissent in a time of political repression will look different from the traditional public outcries. Since repression "historically works on two levels to silence dissent: on a state level but also on a level of civil society, where individuals internalize repression and censor themselves" as they internalized the disciplining regime (2009: 209).

This dissent may also look different among Muslim refugee communities given their histories and experiences with multiple state perceptions. For example, Nojan (forthcoming) found that Afghan refugee parents asked their children to steer clear from politics immediately following 9/11 because of their racialized hauntings derived from escaping the Soviet-Afghan war in 1979. Maira (2016) found that in some cases, Afghans expressed critique of imperial state projects. Still, in action, they reproduced humanitarian efforts that reinforced notions of American exceptionalism as a liberal, multicultural state amidst militarism domestically, at borders, and abroad (Espiritu 2006; Rexhepi 2018). The state relies on these humanitarian discourses to

justify war and imperial involvement through the guise of aid (Espiritu 2006). The racialization of Afghans as both Muslims and refugees provides an interesting case to examine race and cultural citizenship. Few studies have examined further how Afghan refugees experience cultural citizenship and make meaning of their state racial designation as a Middle Eastern North African and thereby White racial group amidst ongoing U.S. imperialism in their homeland. This paper builds on prior scholarship that examines Arab and Iranian American's relation to Whiteness through the case of a Central Asian Muslim refugee group overlooked by MENA studies. Specifically, I examine how Afghans make meaning of their racialization and its implications for cultural citizenship and racial identification.

CURRENT STUDY

Afghan Americans present an interesting case to study Muslim racialization experiences because early in the War on Terror, Afghanistan was marked as the geographical home for terror, the encampment of Osama bin Laden, and the oppression of women (Gregory 2004). Currently, Afghans make up one of the world's largest refugee communities after Syrians. Still, only a tiny fraction lives in the U.S., with newer arrivals being limited to Afghans who worked with U.S. special forces in the homeland. Earlier waves of Afghans were able to benefit from the Refugee Act of 1980 that provided them with a pathway to citizenship and access to welfare (Lipson

and Omidian 1997). Studies on Afghan experiences are limited, with most focusing almost entirely on the first generation mental health and integration. The racialization and national belonging of Afghans remain unexamined. Answering this question allows me to nuance theories of immigrant incorporation and Muslim racialization to consider the persistent effects of U.S. imperial relations and refugee backgrounds among racialization and assimilation experiences.

This paper draws on 27 semi-structured interviews conducted with twenty 1.5 and 2nd generation Afghan-Americans (see Table 4.1). The first round of interviews was completed in 2015-2016; seven additional follow-up interviews were conducted in 2019-2020. The majority of participants resided in California. I gained access to this community through direct and indirect networks. I used stratified snowball sampling methods to obtain a diverse network of participants. Snowball sampling was also essential to establish trust among this community, given ongoing state surveillance they may experience. Two participants did consent to me recording the interview, so I transcribed their responses during the meeting to the best of my ability. Conversations lasted one to two hours. Most interviews were conducted in 2015. A few were conducted in early 2016, and seven were conducted in 2019-2020. After personally transcribing interviews, I coded data using Nvivo qualitative software, first with open coding, then with thematic coding related to race, belonging, and citizenship.

FINDINGS

Throughout this article, Afghans share different affiliations with racial categories based on their own particular understandings of what is politically correct, geographically accurate, or based on personal experiences with racial passing, racism, and privilege. Many felt like they did not have White privilege, but they also felt relatively privileged compared to historically marginalized groups, especially Black Americans. While most preferred to categorize themselves as Asian, the fine print did not allow them to do so since Asian was reserved for the south, southeast, and east Asians. Not knowing how to racially categorize themselves sometimes produced feelings of non-cultural citizenship. While Afghans felt MENA be invisibilizing, in some cases, those who could pass as White felt that if they identified as POC, they would be erasing the experiences of those subject to anti-blackness.

Contending with American Whiteness

The U.S. government characterizes Afghans as middle eastern North African and thus white ever since 1978. The inclusion of MENA into Whiteness has been contentious since it occurred during a time when anti-Arab and anti-Iranian sentiments were increasing because of U.S. imperial involvement in the region abroad. Scholarships on the Arab and Iranian communities since the 1980s have emphasized the hyper-invisibility felt by these communities when experiencing racism and xenophobia amidst their official categorization as White. The following section shows how Afghans make sense of their legal designation as White. In the

excerpt below, Sarah explains the contradictions of being labeled white but treated as Other.

I feel like it's very awkward because I think there's no option for us. I guess we're considered like white, but we're not 100% white... like American White. So it's kind of like, okay, *if they* see you in person and you filled that out, it's like, Oh, you're not white. But it's like, it says here I am. So like, what am I? Yeah. But it's sad cause you're labeling me. You, you have to tell me then what I am... -Sarah, 25, W.

Here Sarah shares her frustration at the choices being offered for her racial categorization. She suggests that American and white are intertwined in her declaration that Afghans are not 100% white. She questions the imposition of labels that determine her racial identity, especially when it does not match her everyday observed race (Roth 2016). Sarah was not the only Afghan to perceive Whiteness and Americanness to be intertwined. Afghans did not like identifying as American nor White as standalone categories. Instead, they preferred hybrid designations as Afghan American and only resorted to White when other categories were not available. As an Afghan American her hybrid identity makes her more inclined to identify with the struggles of people of color than the dominant group that often perceives her to be nonwhite and as a Muslim, outside the bounds of national belonging. Furthermore, Ariana mentions that it feels troublesome to mark "White" on applications because she does identify as a person of color:

I do consider myself a Person of Color, but in the census apps, the Middle East is deemed to be White, and it really bothers me because I don't want to consider myself as Afghan American-White, especially because throughout history, everything that's happened —you know like African Americans, and Native

Americans have been treated in a different way —because we've had issues with the Middle East, we should have our own category also...I don't like to consider or put White, because when I think that, I think American.

Ariana distinguishes her hybridized Afghan-American identity from White-American identity and instead identifies as a Person of Color. She notes how the conflation between Whiteness and Americanness limits her belonging to both of these categories. Like another Afghan woman, Aziza, who wanted her own Afghan checkbox, Ariana argues that Afghans should have their own distinct racial or ethnic categorization alongside other people of color such as Native American and Black Americans because of the political and historical conflict in the "Middle East." Her suggestion would open up racial classification based on not only domestic oppression but also transnational colonial and imperial systems of oppression as well. In another part of the interview, Ariana talks about how her Afghan identity makes her "feel that tension because of war." Ariana's description of feeling paranoid suggests that racial perceptions of how the dominant group perceives her identity may also shape her POC identification. Even while stating that Afghans are not white, some participants resorted to it when other categories' strict boundaries excluded Afghans. For example, Qais, 25, shares:

It's really weird because it's like we're not middle eastern and we're not white, and we're not really southeast Asian, so I either just put other, or I just put white because *what does white really mean?* Because White to me like it's very loose and southeast Asian and middle eastern it's a very strict definition, so I'm definitely not those two, but yeah, maybe I'm white, I don't know, because when I hear white, I don't necessarily think Europe or Italy and countries around that, I just think like skin color. Whereas the other two, I feel more of the geography of where your parents originated from.

Here Qais alludes to the ways that Whiteness has been afforded the privilege of being unbound by geographical and ethnonational markers --It operates as a fluid signifier based on state interests - a privilege that racial others do not hold. In this way, Middle Eastern North Africans' racialization becomes invisible through their conflation with legalized Whiteness. While traditionally White referred to Northwestern Europeans over time, definitions of which groups were included in Whiteness shifted based on religion, bloodline, phenotype, and even common sense. The ambiguous meaning of Whiteness, in addition to the strict ethnic definitions of other categories, has implications for whether or not Afghans felt they could identify as White or people of color. For example, because Whiteness includes skin color, Qais and some other Afghans such as Hakim are not sure if it's selfish of them to identify people of color when they hold light skin color privilege that may allow them to racially pass as ambiguous or white. When I asked him if he would identify as a POC, he hesitated then stated,

I guess sometimes it depends on what arena it's being used. Sometimes I do consider myself a Person of Color, but in general, I don't. Because of my personal skin tone, I'm able to take advantage of looking White, and I don't have to face the same struggle that someone who is dark has to.

When I asked him the same question four years later, at the end of 2019, he said something similar: that he's not sure if he can call himself a person of color because he's able to pass as White and take advantage of Whiteness. As Lopez argues, Hakim recognizes that Whiteness is contextual, and in certain situations, like everyday life, he's able to benefit from his White appearance. Just as Hakim is able to take

advantage of appearance-based Whiteness, he is also able to take advantage of his legal categorization as White. He talks about moving across different racial categories such as White, Asian, and other, based on how it might benefit him socially and economically. According to Hakim, he has never experienced overt discrimination, but when I asked him if he's ever felt uncomfortable expressing his religious or ethnic identities, he told me a story about his workplace and how he sometimes fears being "found out" as Muslim or Afghan:

I always wonder how they [would] feel if they found out because I could tell that some of them are probably more conservative and Republicans...I was never quite sure, like, how they would react if they found out that I was Muslim.

The anxiety of White-passing racialized subjects being "found out " as a racial other takes its toll on families and communities (Brubaker 2010). In the case of Iranian Americans, Maghbouleh has discussed how Whiteness operates on a racial hinge, in which opportunities of Whiteness are only sometimes available but always under conditions. In this case, Hakim's religious and ethnic identities close the door to Whiteness, while his light skin color opens it up. Lopez argues that Whiteness is always contextual and depends on other identities, and in this case, Hakim's ability to disguise his Muslim identity enables him to partake in Whiteness. While Hakim participates in Whiteness, he makes it a point to emphasize that he primarily identifies as Afghan American and expresses wishes for the next generation to resist assimilation and maintain their ethnic and linguistic ties to their homeland, unlike the "Irish and Germans" who fully assimilated.

This case illuminates how racial and religious passing may complicate racial naturalization theory. Though, in theory, Hakim's perceived racial and religious identities enable him to partake in first-class cultural citizenship, his racial and religious consciousness condition his belonging and even lead him to resist it. While a few Afghans such as Qais and Hakim did not feel POC was appropriate, some light-skinned Afghans still perceived it as a generative political identity. For example, Aziza, a light-skinned Afghan brunette who usually passes as non-Muslim, said that most people assume she is Latina or Indian, and she's had no experiences with discrimination except for immediately after 9/11. When asked if she identifies as a POC, she said,

Yeah, I would say so, but I wonder if I would consider myself a person of color; because I haven't faced so much discrimination growing up. It's psychological for me, but I will identify as a person of color because I want to be in solidarity with other minority groups.

Aziza makes it clear that identification as a person of color is associated with having experiences with discrimination in a society based on White supremacy. In this circumstance, POC takes on a political identity that Aziza chooses as a demonstration of solidarity as opposed to skin color. Her decision enables her to feel inclusion into American identity as part of an excluded collective. Hakim, Aziza, and Jawed all described the symbolic and discursive aspects of the War on Terror racialization that has become naturalized, pointing to an internalized psyche of racism that informs their racial identification in and out of Whiteness and POCness. Yet but they

distinguish the feeling of racism from discrimination, which they interpret as direct interpersonal racism.

This section demonstrated how racial naturalization into both Whiteness and POCness is limited for Afghans based on their experiences and perceptions of overt and covert racism waged against Afghans and Muslims in the U.S. and abroad. For most Afghans, their perceptions or experiences of everyday racism and the negative association they had with Americanness made them reluctant to choose White. Qais and Hakim both preferred to identify as Afghan and reluctantly chose White because they didn't want to be associated with Americanness. However, other options were limited, yet they felt it was somewhat justified because of their lighter skin tones. These findings have implications for the ways that racially liminal subjects may subjectively position themselves in racial classification with other non-dominant groups. Afghans' knowledge and experiences with racism led them to resist assimilation ideals of Whiteness and instead adopt solidarity-based POC identities that include their hybridized Afghan-Americanness. While, in some cases, they were able to take advantage of White-passing, their inclusion was limited based on their other racialized identities (i.e., religion) or perceptions of racism. In the next section, I share how Afghans feel about their American citizenship as a legally White group that also identifies as Muslim and prefers a hybridized Afghan American identity.

(Racial) Naturalization as Suspect Citizens

The imperial and racial conditions that positioned Afghans as outside Whiteness and Americanness had implications for not only their racial identification but their legal citizenship as well. While second-generation Afghans were born citizens, the 1.5 generation came to the U.S. as refugees or asylum seekers. Today, only a limited amount of Afghan refugees are admitted into the U.S. after being extremely vetted and on the condition that they helped U.S. troops in the homeland. At the time of the study, all participants were legal citizens, and yet they still held concerns about the ramifications of being "Others" in a time of ongoing ideological and physical war. For example, Qais, a 1.5 generation Afghan American, shares his perspective on the matter.

I got my citizenship right after 9/11. Kind of before I was a citizen, I felt protected by U.S. laws, this is my country, and this is my home. But now there's a huge divide between if you're either Muslim or American, and I can't pick one. That's who I am dividing the two wouldn't make any sense. I'm more aware of the implication of what can happen over this.

Qais arrived in the U.S. at a very young age and obtained citizenship papers shortly after 9/11. His transnational sensibility attunes him to the privilege of being a U.S. resident (as opposed to in a refugee camp) even without legal citizenship because the United States was where he grew up here the entirety of his life. However, he recognizes the importance of legalization, given the cultural discourses that positioned Muslims outside the bounds of American national identity after 9/11. While he personally sees no conflict between his American and Muslim identities, he notes that there are "implications" of having his Muslim identity and the suspicion associated with it. Mina, a second-generation Afghan, explains some of the

"implications" that Qais brings up. For example, when I asked Mina, who considered herself more American than Afghan, how she thought about her citizenship or civil rights, she replied:

Um, my citizenship, I don't think about it so much. I've never been insecure about it. Civil Rights? When I learned about the Japanese Exclusion Act, Executive order 9066, or whatever, I was like, 'oh shit,' that happened. That happened here [United States]! That's frightening. Hearing about Guantanamo Bay, yeah, I had a trippy thing for a second. That's so scary! Someone could just take my dad or brother, God forbid, and just throw them there with no rights, so yeah, it's definitely, I feel like my rights have been threatened, and with past actions [from the government], I feel a little bit frightened... Yeah, like me as an American, my rights feel a little insecure than before.

Mina shares that she doesn't really think about her citizenship but then goes on to reveal moments when she did question whether her rights as an American citizen would be protected. She cites the experiences of the Japanese internments during WWII and Guantanamo Bay amidst the War on Terror as instances that make her feel insecure about the rights afforded by her American citizenship. She recognizes that the stereotypes associated with her ethnic and religious identities may be deemed as a legitimate cause for the government to strip American citizens and, in particular, American Muslim men, such as her dad and brother, of their rights and throw them in Guantanamo Bay if they are rendered "bad Muslims." What is even more interesting about Mina's reflection is that she proudly identifies with her American identity more than her Afghan identity, having never been to Afghanistan, but she distinguishes this belonging from the rights afforded by her American citizenship.

Similarly, Zarina, a 1.5 generation Afghan who came to the States at the age of nine, talks about the pride she takes in her citizenship.

Honestly, I'm relieved, assured, and proud that I did have the citizenship; having citizenship helped avoid a feeling of alienation. If that makes sense, I am American; I am a citizen, I will not get deported, *hopefully not*. I am from this country; this will be where my children will be born and raised, because of what's going on in the world today; I'm really, really happy that I have citizenship here, they say you don't know what you have until you lose it or it's in danger, so for the first time I have thought about my citizenship...my mother was actually scared, thought we were all getting deported, yeah ha-ha, I reassured her.

Zarina talks about how she's proud of her citizenship but still has some doubt on whether or not it will be enough to protect her. She proudly claims her Americanness and citizenship and that she won't be deported, yet her hesitation surfaces with the "hopefully not." At the time of the interview, the San Bernardino attacks and Paris terrorist attacks had taken place. The intense anti-Muslim rhetoric after these events made Zarina even more grateful that she held legal status, but at the same time, it also led her to think about how it may be "in danger." Sociologists and other scholars have reported how after 9/11, many Muslims, irrespective of their citizenship, were also rounded up by the FBI and deported (Selod 2018; Cainkar 2009). As she reassures her mom that they won't be deported, Zarina reveals her own hesitations.

Everyone that I interviewed was born a citizen or got their citizenship around the time of 9/11. There were always contradictions or thoughts on whether they would still be able to obtain citizenship if they applied after 9/11 because of anti-Muslim racism and state rhetoric that cast Muslims and Afghans outside the boundaries of American national identity. Like Zarina, many Afghans recognized the importance and privilege of having legal citizenship --especially in the context of racialization. However, rather than embody passive gratuity as "good Muslim

refugees," Afghans presented complex nationalisms where they recognized their global privilege as U.S. citizens and used it to critique the state for its imperial and racist practices and legacies. For example, on being American, Bilal states:

I think one of the best things about this country is being diverse...Being American is also recognizing it has a dark past, recognizing your privilege of living in the U.S., and speaking out and speaking up certain freedoms.

While Bilal lauds American multiculturalism and pluralism, he critiques the dark history (e.g., settler colonialism, chattel slavery, Jim crow segregation) with which pluralism was built upon. For Bilal, being American is not just about opportunities. It's also about recognizing the historical contexts of inequality in which those opportunities emerged and also taking advantage of those opportunities to speak out on injustice. However, it's not just domestic inequality that Bilal is concerned with. As a second-generation Afghan-American refugee, he holds a transnational lens, which he elaborates on:

Being born an American citizen also reminds me that I'm not being bombed here; I'm paying taxes to a government that's bombing people, family, friends. It's a responsibility we have as people with passports to stand up and to make our voices heard and challenge dominant narratives because we have a lot of freedoms and rights that a lot of people don't have.

Many Afghans noted the privileges afforded to them as Americans, such as freedom of speech, assembly, and religion. They recognized the same rights were not available in other countries. However, unlike humanitarian discourses that paint refugee subjects as "grateful recipients" of rights afforded by the empire, these 1.5 and second-generation Afghans exercised their rights to critique what they saw as injustices perpetrated by their government, especially in the context of the long War

on Terror. Even Mina, who expressed that she was more proud of being American, noted that sometimes she feels ashamed of being American when she takes a global, transnational perspective.

I feel lucky and proud to be born into a pretty nice country, but ashamed because people around the world look down on Americans, even Europeans. The worldview of America is kind of not embarrassing; I'm still proud of it; I wish it was like, you know—I want things done in terms of politics.

Like Mina, many Afghans also wanted things done differently by the government in terms of global entanglements and involvement in Afghanistan in particular. For example, Samir, who was white-passing and 1.5 generation, only identified as Afghan-American "never American" and explained his perception of the positives and negatives of the military involvement in Afghanistan. He states:

It's not really a war on terror; it's about capitalism; the U.S. wants something because of capitalism. There's so much instability in the U.S.; they are taking advantage of weak governments in a lot of the Middle East. The U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan has positives and negatives. The positive is it helped push out the Taliban. Still, the bad is that the whole reason for this wasn't because of al Qaeda, not because of Osama bin Laden; it was to get more power in that area, have more allies in the Middle East, and start bringing in more corporations to try to access more minerals and oil in that country. It created a lot of problems. They are pouring billions into Afghanistan, but there's no growth, no infrastructure, there's so much potential, but the money is in the wrong hands.

As a legal citizen, Samir exercises his free speech to critique U.S. imperialism. As an Afghan American, he holds a transnational lens that enables him to recognize his own complicity if he doesn't speak out on the injustices perpetrated by the country he holds citizenship in. While he acknowledges that involvement in Afghanistan has brought about some positive changes, he does not allow those achievements to

overshadow the government's capitalistic and imperial endeavors that continue to afflict his ethnic homeland. The fact that Samir is white-passing and often passes as white but holds imperial critics that go against assimilationist "good Muslim" politics suggests that an honorary white designation would not be suited. Though Samir offers he doesn't personally experience discrimination and therefore doesn't feel like he can claim a POC identity, his imperial and racial consciousness suggests he experience a global inequality.

Afghans presented complex and sometimes contradictory statements of what it meant to be American. For example, while Mirwais praised American multiculturalism like Bilal's quote, he also emphasized the persistence and culture of racism in the country.

Americans are very unwilling to accept others, like every new immigrant, first African Americans, then Chinese, then Latinos, then Muslims, there's a long list! When people come here, they are oppressed. They all have to fight for their rights. Today, there's still oppression, but not as much and not as noticeable or in your face.

Mirwais recognizes the ways that each minority group in the U.S. becomes racially naturalized as American through experiences with oppression and White supremacy (Cordoba 2005). At the time of the interview in 2015, Mirwais felt that racism was more covert, operating in insidious ways through colorblindness and microaggressions. He places Muslims along with the list of other minorities in the U.S. They also have to fight for their rights. Like Mirwais, Jawed also identified as a person of color because of the ways that he felt an alignment with the struggles of

other communities. When I asked Jawed if he identified as a Person of Color, he replied:

Yeah, absolutely. I think there are some similar challenges and maybe opportunities, among other groups of people who consider themselves in terms of people of color, being part of a non-majority demographic.

Jawed alludes to the opportunities for solidarity or collective action that emerge from identifying with a pan-racial identity. Growing up in a predominantly white town on the East Coast, Jawed identifies as POC because, as he states, most people "just knew" he was Muslim. When I asked him how, he cited his beard, dark hair, and features. Despite Jawed's Muslim visibility, he only mentioned one instance of overt racism when two kids yelled "terrorist" at him at the public library. However, he noted that: "there's a lot more than just physical discrimination. There's symbolic violence, violence perpetrated by the state when associating Muslim with terrorist." Jawed suggests that even if he had no overt encounters with anti-Muslim racism, the affective and discursive violence enacted against Muslims and Afghans remained salient to him. The possibility of experiencing discrimination as a result of America's perception of Muslims led Jawed to be racially conscious from a young age, thereby establishing his belonging into American identity as a person of color."

In this section, I demonstrate how Afghans presented complex nationalisms that sometimes were beset by contradictions based on ideals of the American Dream (opportunity, pluralism) and American racial-imperial projects. While Afghan-Americans were, on the one hand, we're grateful and proud to be Americans because of the pluralism and compositional diversity, on the other hand as imperial

subjectivities enabled them to recognize the global and racial injustices perpetrated by their country to racial minorities at home and abroad. Cordoba argues that being naturalized into an exclusionary American positionality has the potential to develop a third-world consciousness. While the third world positionally does not grow by itself or automatically, Afghans' experiences and perceptions of racism and their racial and cultural liminal subjects affords them opportunities to reflect upon injustices that are systemic in the United States. Afghans' American nationalism did not comply with the good Muslim mentality that they should be grateful refugee subjects, but instead, they took advantage of their citizenship to exercise their civil rights for free speech and critique of U.S. investments in global imperial and racial projects. Afghans' production of what it means to be American reveals that they refuse to fit into honoree whiteness that requires a good Muslim mentality.

Distinguishing Afghan from MENA

As in the previous section, many Afghans resisted the White racial designation and the Middle Eastern North African classification (MENA). This term, initially created by colonial Britain, became popularized over time (Khoshnevis 2019). However, it's most commonly used to refer to the Arab world and majority Muslim countries in North Africa. Starting with Iran and moving West, the classification typically excludes Afghanistan. Most recently, Arab and MENA groups have been pushing to create a separate ethnic designation for MENA, different from White, that Afghans and other ethnic groups would be classified under. However,

many Afghans in my study distinguished themselves from the MENA category and instead chose to assert their Afghan identities.

Zarina refuses the MENA category because she feels it is not an accurate representation of her Afghan identity since MENA often refers to Arab peoples. The racialization of Arabs in the U.S. has resulted in a conflation between all Arab and Arab-perceived peoples and Muslims. The conflation of Afghans with Middle Eastern and Arab peoples contributes to Afghans' feelings of illegibility, non-belonging, and invisibility. For example, as a hijabi, Zarina talked about how her Muslim identity is constantly conflated with Arabness.

Now that I'm wearing a hijab, unfortunately, because of people's ignorance, they automatically assume that I'm Arab. They can't name a specific country; they don't know what constitutes the Arab world, or even worse, when I tell them that I'm Afghan, they're like, yeah, so you're Arab, and I'm like no, I'm not Arab. So I have to clear that up, that Afghanistan is not in the Middle East. The Middle East is just a term coined by the West. One day, they drew some borders around and said, 'okay, this is the Middle East.'

Zarina's experience wearing the hijab exposed her to the common U.S. trope that all Arabs are Muslims, and all Muslims are Arabs. She resists the conflations produced by common stereotypes and, in particular, the term Middle Eastern because it is a colonial term often used in place of naming the specificities of different Arab, Mediterranean, West, and Central Asian and North African countries. Being hailed as Middle Eastern raises anti-colonial critiques against the conflation between Afghans and Arabs and the conflations of all Middle Eastern peoples under that common designation. It also touches upon some Afghan's resistance to the idea of any colonial influence in Afghanistan at all, and their pride in "never being colonized" and their

ancestral homeland designated as the "graveyard of empires." These colonial confluences exacerbate Afghans' feelings of invisibility as a minority within many communities (American, Middle Eastern, Muslim). Zarina also "definitely" identifies as a person of color, suggesting that her rejection of MENA might also be due to its conflation with Whiteness. For example, Zarina still aligns the struggles of Afghans with Arab communities - especially those who are refugees.

She shares: "afghans don't have a specific category they fall into, and at the same time, they are the neediest population along with some Arab communities. If there's an other option, I just do Other. And if there's not. Then I just usually end up doing Caucasian, and then when you do Caucasian, then you are not needy at all. Then there's no spotlight there's no assistance coming toward your way; when I was working for a [refugee serving] organization, we were in the process of creating a reform or change to create a bubble that says, hey I'm Afghan, to allow our voices to be heard so that we don't fall into the cracks, so people don't know who we are and what our needs are."

Zarina's experience working with refugee serving organizations attunes her to the importance of having racial recognition to obtain state resources. It also reveals that her rejection of MENA is not a result of different political goals between the Afghan and Arab communities but rather a means of navigating bureaucracy. Like Zarina, when given a choice, many Afghans chose to self- "Other," as this was, to them, the closest categorization and the one that enabled the most room for their self-identification. As Ibrahim stated,

I am Other or White on every census. When there's a Middle Eastern category, I feel pressure to fill that bubble, even though we are not Middle Eastern. The other option is an "Other," which's the closest thing since there's no Central Asian category.

Despite colonial pressures to identify as Middle Eastern, choosing Other is one way that Afghans take back control of their racial classification. Some census forms ask for Middle Eastern North African people's specific ethnicities, such as Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian. Afghan is not represented in either the MENA or the Asian disaggregated options, making their preferred Central Asian categorization more complicated. The colonial confluences also take away the agency from Afghans to determine their racial categorization. For example, Abdul-Rahman shares a story in which he and his co-worker, who both worked for the State government, argued about his racial identity. He recounts:

I was eating Afghan food at work, and someone asked me, 'what is that, falafel?' I said, 'No falafel is what Arabs eat.' His co-worker responded, "Afghans are Arabs."

Abdul Rahman said that they went back and forth, arguing with each other until his co-worker left. Later, when Abdul-Rahman was back in the office, he got a text from his co-worker apologizing, stating that 'Afghans are not Arabs.' Abdul-Rahman said, "I couldn't believe that an international relations graduate could be so ignorant. These interactions demonstrate how Afghans become racialized as Middle Eastern in the United States. While not all Afghans felt as vehemently opposed to identifying as Middle Eastern, most with imperial consciousness and some knowledge of the history of Afghanistan did.

Just as colonialism involves control over other countries, colonial confluences of race enable the dominant group to control and characterize individuals' racial identification, despite their subjectivities. Many Afghans reported similar frustrating

experiences of being told their racial identity and having it imposed on them. Aziza mentioned,

I would like to see an Afghan checkbox. I made my checkbox and put Afghan. I used to use Asian, but I was informed that that was politically incorrect. But I didn't like choosing White because of that privilege. I did have privilege, but not like that. I don't put Middle Eastern because we're [Afghanistan] not in the Middle East...but what do I put now? Are they going to make a box for us?

In a rebellious move, Aziza expresses her racial agency by creating her checkbox on paper forms. Her preferred categorization is Asian, but she has been persuaded that this categorization is incorrect. The politically "correct" categorization of Afghans is White. While Aziza recognizes her skin privilege as a lighter-skinned person, she resists marking White, noting the difference in power between White Caucasians and her community. Her thoughts about a separate box allude to the ongoing war in Afghanistan and domestic racism against Muslim and Afghan peoples in the U.S. In this statement, Aziza connects a history of racial inequality with the creation of distinct racial categories. If Afghans were to accept their categorization as White or even as Middle Eastern, it would assume that Afghans, a primary refugee community, had resources and political power as strong as the European Americans and the more established Arab American community, which they do not. It may also extinguish their imperial subjectivities as the War in Afghanistan continues in their diasporic homelands. In this way, Afghans' desire for their distinct racial category becomes a means for recognition of the injustices wielded by the state against their transnational community in the U.S. and Afghanistan.

The responses in this section demonstrate how Afghan's ethnic/national identities are not racially intelligible. Their resistance to racial naturalization as Middle Eastern North African may be to distance themselves from anti-Arab sentiments and their racialization as "middle Eastern" while simultaneously a desire to establish their own place and voice within the American racial landscape as imperial subjects of the War in Afghanistan.

While some Afghans adopted MENA as an identifier, most educated Afghans resisted the imposition pointing to the limitations of this pan-ethnic categorization to represent their interests as a community and the coalitional political work that needs to occur to extend this identity or produce a new one. It also reflects the current limitations of this category as it continues to be conflated legally with Whiteness and culturally as Arabness.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the question, how do Afghans make sense of their racialization in relation to their state legal designation as White and Middle Eastern North African? I found that Afghans' racial liminality reveals the dialectic between colonial projects, and experiences with racial inequality and privilege inform individuals' racial self-ascriptions. Participants' experiences and knowledge of race and what it means to be "American" lead them to resist both American and White identities. They also fought being hailed as MENA because of its inclusion into Whiteness as well as the distinct ethnic, cultural, and linguistic barriers between

Afghans and other Arab and North African peoples. When Afghans could racially pass as White, they were less likely to identify as POC and resorted to identifying as White, because they felt they would otherwise erase the racial experiences of darker-skinned communities. Their resistance to Whiteness and MENA categories and proclivity towards identifying as POC point to their consciousness as racial and colonial-others in the American imagination. This leads to complex nationalism as they are legally included as citizens but socially excluded as others. I show how their racial and imperial consciousness and refugee background enable them to recognize the privileges associated with American citizenship and take pride in its polyculturalism while maintaining a critique of the state's history of racist and imperial actions (Maira 2004).

This paper makes several contributions. First, I argue that Afghans resist their affinity with Whiteness because of its conflation with American identity and racial and imperial legacies associated with it. These findings challenge existing sociological theories of assimilation and “honorary whiteness” that suggest MENA subgroups will become white or aspire towards Whiteness for inclusion. Unlike prior studies (among Latinos) that suggest white-passing enables colorblind ideologies and affinity towards Whiteness, I argue that Afghans instead develop racial consciousness because of their everyday experiences with racism as well as an imperial consciousness regarding U.S. involvement in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Findings also reveal how state categories imbue static or fluid meanings based on state racial hierarchies. In some cases, Afghans resorted to choosing White, which

they felt was more ambiguous compared to Asian and MENA that comprised strict racial and geographically-bound boundaries that excluded them. This finding reveals why some MENA subgroups may identify as white even if MENA is an included category. It also shows how White identification doesn't always result in the acceptance of colorblind ideologies if symbolic and other racialized boundaries persist. Their perceptions of a racial hinge, symbolic doors that open and close to Whiteness, also led some Afghans to choose White if they felt they could benefit from White-phenotypical privilege. In these cases, they were less likely to identify as POC because they thought doing so would erase the experiences of African Americans and those with darker phenotypes. Overall, Afghans, whether they choose White or not, resisted assimilation into Americanness because of its associations with privilege and imperial power and instead claimed roots in their hybrid Afghan-American identities.

Second, I show how anti-Muslim ethnoracism shapes Afghans' experiences with cultural citizenship to extend theories of racial naturalization to account for imperial subjectivities. I contribute to studies of different Muslim ethnonational subgroups' cultural citizenship practices by revealing the ways that an overlooked refugee community perceives their citizenship rights. While Afghan-Americans were grateful for their citizenship, and the privilege of pluralism and civil rights associated with living in the United States, their transnational diasporic identities provided them with a “second sight” (Dubois 1904; Cordoba 2005) that led them to practice dissenting citizenship and be critical of the imperial and racial projects that affected

Afghans and other racialized groups domestically and globally. In fact, some Afghans who claimed to have never personally experienced discrimination articulated their experiences in terms of symbolic or psychological racism that made them feel the burden of the gaze nonetheless (Dubois; Fanon). However, their racial naturalization into American identity as Racial-Others meant that they also had to contend with the possibility that their American citizenship may also one day be stripped if they were deemed too suspicious and "bad Muslims." Prior studies have found that the uncertain implications between their cultural and legal citizenship lead some Afghans and Muslim to self-surveil (Nojan, forthcoming; Maira 2009); this study found that it can also make them more likely to take advantage of the opportunities afforded to them as American citizens to engage in counter-hegemonic and complex nationalisms by speaking out against racial and imperial inequalities waged by the U.S. In these ways, this research demonstrates that Afghans practice both multicultural and dissenting citizenship through their complex nationalism that arises from their racialization as Muslims, refugees, and subjects of the War on Terror and War in Afghanistan. Cordoba argues that being naturalized into an exclusionary American identity has the potential to develop a third-world consciousness. While third-world consciousness does not develop by itself or automatically, Afghans' experiences and perceptions of racism and their racial and cultural liminal subjects afford them opportunities to reflect upon injustices that are systemic in the United States. These findings extend the literature on racial naturalization theories and racialization of MENA people by demonstrating how anti-Muslim racism or ethnic

racial and imperial subjectivities may also shape integration into an American identity even as an excluded group.

Third, this study sheds light on the applicability of MENA as a designated ethno racial category for different subgroups from West and Central Asia. I found that Afghans did not readily adopt MENA as their chosen racial categorization, implying that Central Asians may not see the new census category as adequately representative. College-educated Afghans were likely to resist their interpellation as MENA and preferred to claim agency in asserting their own Afghan identities because of its colonial roots and current connotations with Whiteness. While Afghans recognized a commonality of experience between Arab refugees and sometimes adopted MENA colloquially to define a common racialization experience under the War on Terror, Afghans persisted in their racial classification as "Other: Afghan" and questioned under what conditions they would experience the inclusion of their own category based on ethnonational and imperial oppression. In other words, because Afghans' racialization consists of also being conflated with the Middle East, they also resist this categorization even if they find commonalities between themselves and Arab communities culturally and politically. Resisting MENA might be an enactment of cultural survivance by Afghans amidst cultural and imperial erasure (Nojan, forthcoming). Findings challenge MENA categorical inclusion and suggest the need for coalitional mobilizing around the identity.

Furthermore, I argue that Afghans racial and imperial consciousness made them more likely to identify as POC as opposed to White and MENA because of the political nature of this category that does not seek to conflate different groups' experiences. Afghans rejected the colonial pan-ethnic categorization of "Middle Eastern" because it was conflated with Whiteness but also because it erased Afghans' distinct cultural and linguistic diversity as non-Arabs. In the pan-ethnic/pan racial POC categorization, Afghans find inclusion into American pluralism and the ability to come together as a collective while understanding the unique differences and imperial, racial subjectivities of each particular subgroup within the broader collective identity. This reveals the ways that the MENA category may be limited to producing a similar solidarity-based identity among groups who may be similarly affected by the War on terror racial project but find distinctions based on geopolitical, cultural, and linguistic differences. While POC was a chosen, reflexive identity, MENA had been imposed on them by the state. This paper has implications for extending racial naturalization to consider how a third world consciousness may also be produced through imperial subjectivities of refugee or diaspora subjects to facilitate integration into American racial hierarchies. This finding contributes to studies on how different dimensions and origins of racial categorizations can shape identification. It demonstrates the ways that racial convergence among POC offers fruitful ground for solidarity and critique in a way that MENA as a state-enforced designation may not. This makes sense since MENA is about state recognition efforts and mobilizing resources, while POC emerges from a coalition an anti-racist and its

anti-imperialist critique based on the third world movement. This points to the unnaturalness of MENA as a pan-ethnic category and the need for collective action and identity work between Arab and less prominent non-Arab communities to address contradictions and paradoxes of racial experiences within the community (Cordoba 2005).

CONCLUSION

Analyzing racial assignments and ascriptions in relation to state and subjective belonging have implications for political and social belonging and action. In April 2021, during the annual Association for Asian American Studies conference's West Asian section meeting, a conversation about disciplinary boundaries emerged as similar initiatives were happening across organizations that identified differently as "Mena" Arab, West Asian, Iranian, SWANA, Muslim studies. What came up for these scholars of different political and ethnonational, and religious affiliations was that these labels and boundaries were inadequate for bridging critical political alliances, and yet at the same time, these same spaces were needed to address the unique nature of racializations and community belonging. The tension between these disciplinary boundaries mirror the tension that people from these communities experience in their everyday experiences filling out forms, seeking community, and engaging in politics. This paper illustrates the limitations of racial categorization and how racial subjects make meaning of their racial experiences in spite of and amidst state impositions.

Overall, this paper shows how race is a social construction and how identification is always contextual and informed by socio-political- historical conjectures. Identities are created in context and strategically and can be unreliable sources of information if not updated. What we learn from the Afghan case is that state recognition is essential. It is not the only means by which organizing can occur. While categories are important, they are beside the point. This article showed that racial and imperial consciousness is the most fertile area for racial convergence across different communities, borders, and boundaries in resistance to White supremacist and capitalistic state projects. Afghans complex nationalisms derived from their racial and imperial critiques and status as legal citizens, Their proclivity to POC demonstrates the desire among immigrant groups for the language and coalitional outlook that they need to engage in identity politics that do not erase them but recognizes intertwined and relational oppressions at the hands of White supremacy and racial capitalism. Future studies should examine under what conditions Afghans and other MENA subgroups find racial belonging as Asians.

Table 5.1. Demographics of Afghan Participants					
Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Phenotype (interviewer -reported)	Immigrant/Refug ee Generation	Geographic Location
Samir	23	M	Light hair, eyes, features, White passing	1.5 generation refugee	bay area
Hakim	31	M	light hair, skin, white-passing	1.5 generation refugee	southern California

Mina	22	W	dark hair, light skin	second generation	central valley
Parwana	22	W	light hair, light skin	second generation	central valley
Marina	25	W	light hair, light skin	1.5 generation refugee	bay area
Helai	21	W	dark hair, olive skin	1.5 generation	bay area
Aziza	22	W	light hair, light skin	second generation	bay area
Noah	27	M	dark hair olive skin	1.5 generation	central valley
Zarina	26	W	light skin, dark hair	1.5 generation	bay area/ Midwest/central valley
Gul	24	W	light hair olive skin	second generation	central valley
Layma	20	W	olive skin, light hair	second generation	central valley
Qais	25	M	olive skin, light hair	1.5 generation	BAY AREA
Afsana	22	W	light skin, dark hair	1.5 generation	bay area
Ariana	21	W	olive skin, dark hair	second generation	bay area
Jawed	28	M	light skin, dark hair	1.5 generation	east coast
Abdul-Rahman	25	M	light skin, dark hair	second generation	central valley
Nadir	19	M	olive skin d	second generation	bay area
Ibrahim	28	M	dark hair olive-toned skin	second generation	bay area
Mirwais	21	M	darker skin and hair	second generation	bay area
Bilal	29	M	darker skin and hair	second generation	bay area
*All participants were U.S. citizens at the time of the interviews.					

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of racialization processes by showing how anti-Muslim racism manifests in different contexts to shape experiences with racism, campus climate, identity-belonging, and civic and political engagement. My dissertation argues that anti-Muslim racism pervades through both visible and invisible racial mechanisms. Up to this point, Muslim racialization has focused on the very visible, gendered Muslim figure and phenotypic, cultural, and national markers that cue a conflation with terrorism. As a whole, this dissertation argues that while these visible tropes persist, anti-Muslim racism also operates through hyper-invisibility - produced through covert racialized schemas embedded within institutions, intersectional oversights of competing and intersecting racial projects, racialized hauntings of imperial and migrant histories, and racial ascriptions that promote cultural and political erasure.

Chapter 1 introduced the study. Chapter 2 described the ways that anti-Muslim racism becomes embedded within institutions through racial-religious decoupling, which limited Muslims' agency and made their racialized experiences invisible. Chapter 3 demonstrated that obscuring the racialization of race, in addition to ethnonational backgrounds of religious communities, obfuscates the ways that Muslims' multiple marginalizations induce and, in some cases, limit their civic participation across and between communities. Chapter 3 also argued that racialized hauntings, or the ways study participants experienced stereotypes and tropes tied to their visible identities coupled with the invisible effects of the imperial contexts of their refugee background, shape their experiences with anti-Muslim racism. In chapter 4, I argued that Afghans subjectively resist racial ascriptions as both White and MENA because it promotes their erasure as hybridized subjects with distinct cultural and imperial histories that need reckoning. In the following sections, I place these findings in conversation with existing scholarship to highlight my dissertation's contributions.

HOW ARE MUSLIMS RACIALIZED?

I argue that Muslim racialization occurs through both hypervisible and hyper-invisibility. Up to this point, most studies on Muslim racialization have examined the hypervisible, but few also account for the invisible elements of racialization. I propose two new concepts, racial-religious decoupling and anti-Muslim ethnoracism, to illuminate how the invisible may also contribute to racialization. In the first case,

invisibility operates through intersectional oversights and the racial schemas that ignore the racialization of Muslim religious identities. In the second case, I show how the invisibility of Muslim-particular ethnonational, imperial, and refugee contexts contributes to their racialization.

Anti-Muslim Racism as Racial-Religious Decoupling

Racial Religious decoupling emerges from my study of institutional campus climates using UC-wide survey data and a case study of a participatory action research project. I propose the term racial-religious decoupling to refer to how notions about Muslims as a homogenous religious group legitimates anti-Muslim racism in the form of the unequal distribution of resources, constrained agency of non-dominant racialized-religious groups, and hyper(in)visibility. Racial-religious decoupling extends theories of racialized organizations and critical race theory to explain the ways that anti-Muslim racism can become institutionalized by assuming a separation between race, religion, and power. It also explains why Muslims rate both respect for race and respect for religion lower than their religious peers, which negatively shapes their perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity.

Racial-religious decoupling shows how universities' racial schemas ignore the intersections of inequality embedded in race and religion, reinforcing the notion that Muslims are a religious-homogenous monolith and that university administrations are religious and politically neutral contexts cannot support marginalized racialized-religious groups. While administrators often recognize anti-Semitism as unacceptable

racial discrimination, opposing anti-Muslim racism remains an uncertain practice for universities when the official state practices and officials continue to normalize it and perpetuate racial perceptions of Muslims as deviant and foreign Others outside the scope of American belonging. Racial-religious decoupling demonstrates that universities create policies that appeal to and privilege students of the dominant group, and diversity efforts are superficial and narrow (Mitchell, 2018). Racial-religious decoupling offers a way to understand the de-legitimation of Muslim experiences on campus by university administrators and a path forward towards a more robust anti-racist agenda that accounts for racialized religion.

Racial-religious decoupling implies that addressing anti-Muslim racism at the institutional level requires an anti-racist politic that addresses anti-blackness and white supremacy at its core instead of religious inclusion. This study has implications for how campus racial and religious climates are considered separate and encourage the study of anti-Muslim racism beyond interpersonal racism to be studied as a phenomenon that interacts with and manifests as institutionalized racism through both overt and covert mechanisms. First, I extend critical race theory by making visible how institutions are bounded by racial ideologies such as White supremacy and Christian secularism. Christian secularism operates on the assumption of separation of church and state to uphold Christian ideals while ignoring the religious needs of non-Christian communities. Theories of racialized organizations account for how institutions are not race-neutral and become embedded with racial ideologies and overt and covert discriminatory practices to reinforce societal inequalities. I reform

Ray's (2019) concept of "racial-decoupling," which refers to how diversity initiatives separate commitments for racial equity and material resources to account for religion and racialized religion.

Proposing Anti-Muslim (Ethno)Racism and Racialized Hauntings

Through a study of Afghan refugee's racialization, I offer a new concept, anti-Muslim ethnoracism, to nuance how refugee, imperial and ethnonational contexts shape Muslim racialization experiences. I argue for a conceptual reframing of anti-Muslim racism to anti-Muslim ethnoracism, which accounts for the ways that ethnonational, refugee and colonial contexts underpin the racialization processes of Muslims in addition to their religious identities. Hence, I build on prior studies of ethnoracism (Arando and Rebello-Gil 2004) and anti-Muslim racism (Selod 2018; Cainkar 2009) to broaden and nuance the racializing experiences of Muslims. One mechanism by which anti-Muslim ethnoracism becomes apparent is what I call *racialized hauntings*, which refers to how respondents in this study experience stereotypes and tropes tied to their visible identities and the invisible effects of the imperial contexts of their refugee backgrounds. I apply Avery Gordon's theory of haunting, which investigates historical and social effects of a phenomenon, to racialized contexts of refuge to highlight the ways that colonial and imperial logics pervade across homelands and racializing circumstances.

Through the concept of racialized hauntings, I challenge theories that suggest self-surveillance and countersurveillance practices emerge only in the post-9/11

context around Muslimness. I nuanced theories of countersurveillance to show how self-governing practices were informed by more than a "reactive religious identity" (Peek 2005). They also involve subjects' transnational and migrant histories formed in the context of multiple homeland insecurities. In this way, a focus on racialized hauntings offers a lens into the sociopolitical context of migration and the imperial ties that continue to shape responses and experiences with racism across generations. I argue that Muslims' imperial racialization does not begin in the U.S. but rather begins in the discourses that justify U.S. intervention in their homelands, which created the conditions under which they have to move across borders (Kim 2008; Gowayed 2020). These insights challenge immigrant incorporation theories to consider a global approach that accounts for the context of exit in addition to reception (Portes and Rumbaut 2014).

Finally, this paper's findings suggest examining anti-Muslim ethnoracism captures nuances of Muslim racialization regarding subjects' particular migration patterns and contexts of exit. It challenges theories of assimilation and Muslim -first reactive religiosity by illuminating how imperial consciousness contributes to replenished and resistant ethnonational and hybrid identities. It also further nuances studies of Muslim countersurveillance by demonstrating how certain self-surveilling practices may have deeper roots than post 9/11 racialization. This research has implications for the study of inter-ethnic and intra-religious racialization. It suggests that particularities may exist within religious subgroups, which produce different experiences with racialization and U.S. imperialism (Espiritu 2006). Findings also

demonstrate that ethnicity and religion produce external and internalized boundaries to integration. In conclusion, *anti-Muslim ethnoracism* contributes to our understanding of the effect of ethnonational, migrant, and imperial relations on Muslims' particular experiences with U.S. discrimination and their responses to it.

HOW DOES ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM SHAPE MUSLIM'S EXPERIENCES ?

In the above section, I introduced two new concepts that help explain how anti-Muslim racism manifests in institutional contexts and in the context of particular ethnonational, refugee-imperial subjectivities through invisibility as well as hypervisibility. I show how anti-Muslim racism is embedded in covert racial schemas of the university, and the ethnonational and imperial contexts of religion are racialized through both hypervisible and hyper(in)visibility of their particular ethnoracial, religious migrant backgrounds. This section shows how Muslims' racialization shapes their outcomes along with civic engagement, cultural citizenship, and racial identification.

Summary of Findings

I argue that racial-religious decoupling restricts Muslim students' agency by limiting available resources, producing hyper(in)visibility, and reinforcing their Otherness when they seek institutional change. Racial-religious decoupling creates a hostile institutional climate in addition to the sociopolitical with which Muslim students navigate. The result becomes higher civic participation among the Muslim community than other religious groups on campus to form a sense of belonging

and/or counter institutional and sociopolitical barriers that reinforce their Otherness. However, these studies show how within the community, engagement can vary. Muslim women and international students were more likely to be engaged compared to men and domestic students. Southeast Asian Muslim students were less likely to engaged compared to MENA Muslims. This finding suggests that intersecting identities and experiences within the community may contribute to variability even when collectively they seem highly engaged.

Anti-Muslim ethnoracism helps explain some of the variability within the Muslim community along the lines of ethnonational, migrant, and imperial contexts. In my study of 1.5 and second-generation Afghan refugees, I find that the racialized hauntings they experience as a result of their ethnonational, refugee, and imperial consciousness lead them to experience hyper invisibility as subjects of u.S. imperialism and invisible as Afghan Americans, which results in the rejection of their racial assignment as "White" which they associate with American Imperial Whiteness. Their hypervisibility also emerges in their racializing experiences that conflate them with Arabs and the Middle East. As a result, they express their agency amidst these racializing discourses by enacting cultural survivance and preferring their own Afghan category rather than identifying as MENA. Afghans racialization as refugees and children of refugees led many to adopt both polycultural and dissenting citizenships, where they expressed their appreciation for having legal rights and the diversity of experience in the U.S. while also recognizing and identifying the dark underbelly of American democracy (i.e., systemic oppression of minorities and

imperialism). These imperial feelings (Maira 2004, 2009) moved Afghans towards a third world consciousness and have the potential for future solidarity if cultivated.

My study of Muslim and Afghan racialization made several contributions to the literature regarding outcomes such as civic participation, racial naturalization, immigrant integration, and campus climate.

Campus Racial and Religious Climates

According to prior studies, racism plays a central role in the racialization of Muslims and Islamophobic incidents in educational contexts. However, few studies examined how anti-Muslim racism became institutionalized in campus racial or religious climates to shape Muslims' perceptions of institutional commitments to diversity compared to other groups. I found anti-Muslim racism manifests through the following racial mechanisms: 1) restricting Muslim agency and access to cultural and social resources, and 2) reinforcing Muslims' Otherness when they point out institutional deficiencies to discourage them from advocating for themselves. These findings demonstrate how Orientalist and War on Terror logics about Muslims become embedded in liberal university settings. I argue that institutional commitment to diversity was significantly mediated by respect for race and religious identity, especially for Muslims compared to Christians. I demonstrated how Muslim students' hyper(in)visibility for their racial and racialized religious experiences creates inequitable access to resources and constrains their agency, ultimately affecting their

perceptions of campus commitment and racial-religious respect. From these findings, I challenge critical race theories and racialized organizations that do not account for racialized religion. I also extend campus religious climate studies to show how racism is an essential study of religious students' experiences on campus. Racial-religious decoupling also extends studies of Muslim racialization by demonstrating how anti-Muslim racism can become institutionalized through racial schemas tied to material resources. Institutionalized anti-Muslim racism results in lower ratings of respect for race and religion among Muslims and directly correlates to negative perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity compared to Christians.

Racialized Religion and Civic Participation

Secondly, this dissertation contributes to studies on civic and political participation among multiple marginalized groups. I argue Muslims' religious identity leads them to be more civically engaged than other religious groups; because of how Muslims' religious identities are racialized and subject to discrimination in the current climate. Hence, I build on complex religion to demonstrate how inequality embedded in racialized religion shapes civic and participatory outcomes across religious groups in addition to race. This study also extends previous studies on Muslim civic and political engagement by comparing racial and ethnic minority subgroups such as Southeast Asians and Black/African American Muslims with Middle Eastern/North Africans, the group whose political activity has been most studied. Additional research should examine how these subgroups within the Muslim community

experience racialization in the U.S. context based on their multiple-marginalized identities and why Southeast Asian civic outcomes are significantly lower than others in the community. This finding has implications for the applicability of group identity threat and its motivation for engagement across non-dominant racial and religious groups. It also addresses how complex religion can explain variance within a group, even amidst a collective racialized-religious identity.

This study used data that encompassed nine public research universities from one state. Future studies should examine whether similar patterns hold across a national sample and with larger racial subsample populations within the Muslim community in different contexts. Additionally, future studies should further examine what elements of campus climate and institutional-level factors may hinder or promote engagement. While the database for this study did not have any campus-level data, all universities in the sample employ similar institutional opportunities for engagement. Studies should account for Muslim civic engagement patterns outside of college and determine how post-college participation patterns compare to non-college graduates. Since higher education provides direct access to civic opportunities (Flanagan and Levine 2007; Perrin and Gillis 2019), Muslim college students are likely to have more civic engagement options and be involved at higher rates than non-college graduates. Future studies should examine whether group identity threat continues to enhance civic participation among non-college graduates within the Muslim community compared to other religious communities. Finally, this survey

analysis can be further nuanced with qualitative studies to examine why Muslim students may or may not be engaged.

Challenging Refugee Assimilation

This study complicates depictions of Afghans as "good refugees" and grateful recipients of U.S. involvement by illuminating how they continue to be racialized within the U.S. as dangerous Muslim subjects and illegible American subjects. Their racial illegibility and recognition produce a ghostly effect making it difficult to claim access to discursive, political material belonging to any particular homeland. Second, I show how anti-Muslim ethnoracism shapes Afghans' experiences with cultural citizenship to extend theories of racial naturalization to account for imperial subjectivities. While Afghan-Americans were grateful for their citizenship and the privilege of pluralism and civil rights associated with living in the United States, their transnational diasporic identities provided them with a "second sight" (Dubois 1904; Cordoba 2005) that led them to practice dissenting citizenship and be critical of the imperial and racial projects that affected Afghans and other racialized groups domestically and globally. In fact, some Afghans who claimed to have never personally experienced discrimination articulated their experiences in terms of symbolic or psychological racism that made them feel the burden of the gaze nonetheless (Dubois; Fanon). However, their racial naturalization into American identity as racial-Others meant that they also had to contend with the possibility that their American citizenship may also one day be stripped if they were deemed too

suspicious and "bad Muslims." These findings extend the literature on racial naturalization theories and racialization of MENA people by demonstrating how anti-Muslim racism or ethnic racial and imperial subjectivities may also shape integration into an American identity even as an excluded group.

I argue that Afghans resist their affinity with Whiteness because of its conflation with American identity and racial and imperial legacies associated with it. Unlike prior studies (among Latinos) that suggest white-passing enables colorblind ideologies and affinity towards Whiteness, I argue that Afghans instead develop racial consciousness because of their everyday experiences with racism as well as an imperial consciousness regarding U.S. involvement in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Through an examination of the reasons behind choosing certain racial identities, findings also reveal how state categories imbue static or fluid meanings based on state racial hierarchies and limit opportunities for mutual identification. In other words, this paper revealed how Whiteness is afforded discursive privileges that encourage fluid conceptions of race, whereas other categories are limited to strict racial and geographically-bound boundaries. This privilege encourages racially ambiguous groups who are bound between different categories to resort to Whiteness over other racialized categories.

Complicating Middle Eastern North African

I challenge studies that propose MENA as an inclusive racial option. I argue that the MENA category may hold limitations to producing racial and political

belonging, given its colonial roots and current connotations with Whiteness. Given that MENA was constructed as a colonial term and remained conflated with Arabs, 1.5 and second-generation Afghans who identified geographically as central Asia in my study did not find this to be a correct or preferred category. Findings challenge MENA categorical inclusion and suggest that without coalitional mobilizing to advance a common ethno racial designation, this designation may be contributing to cultural imperialism and erasure similar to the broad White assignment. In other words, because Afghans' racialization consists of also being conflated with middle eastern, they also resist this categorization even if they find commonalities between themselves and Arab communities culturally and politically. Implications suggest how race is a social construction and how identification is always contextual and informed by socio-political- historical conjectures. Identities are created in context and strategically and can be unreliable sources of information if not updated. What we learn from the Afghan case is that state recognition is essential. It is not the only means by which organizing can occur. While categories are important, they are beside the point. This chapter showed that racial and imperial consciousness is the most fertile area for racial convergence across different communities, borders, and boundaries in resistance to White supremacist and capitalistic state projects. Future studies should examine under what conditions Afghans and other MENA subgroups find racial belonging as Asians.

FUTURE ANALYSIS AND LIMITATIONS

Examining the racialization of different Muslim American diasporic subgroups enables an understanding of the nuanced ways that anti-Muslim racism manifests in everyday life that sustain empire across borders and generations. Future studies should examine whether racialized haunting manifests differently for Afghans from different socioeconomic backgrounds who did not attend college to account for the ways that college facilitated identity development and consciousness. The research frame used here should also be applied to Muslim and "Muslim perceived" communities such as Iranians and Arabs from a broad geographic scale to build comparative racial analysis and understand how specific racial and imperial contexts produce similar or divergent pathways of racialization.

Future studies should examine whether similar patterns hold across a national sample and with larger racial subsample populations within the Muslim community in different contexts. While descriptive statistics showed more racial differences within the Muslim community, racial differences were not significant in the logistic models except Southeast Asians. A larger subsample for each racial/ethnic group and, in particular, Black/African American Muslims would help determine if sample size played a role in producing inconclusive results. The low standard errors suggest that future studies might find significant differences among subgroups if the sample size was larger for each subgroup. Different types of engagement should also be considered outside of civic participation, and whether political consciousness results in action as well, and under what conditions.

This study used data that encompassed nine public research universities from one state. Civic participation on University of California campuses may be inflated as more than half participated in an organization on campus (61%). Generalizations to other four-year public research universities should compare the baseline levels of engagement before making comparisons. Furthermore, participation in a student organization is a standard indicator for civic participation; however, without information about the type of organization, there are limited claims about political engagement. Future studies should account for the type of student organization students are involved in (Reyes 2015). For example, in the case of Muslims, previous studies have documented how Palestinian activism among student organizations can lead to increased surveillance and suspicion from administration (Chatterjee and Maira 2014; Maira 2016; Turk, Senzaki, and Rowther 2012). Future studies should further examine what elements of campus climate and institutional-level factors may hinder or promote engagement. While the database for this study did not have any campus-level data, all universities in the sample employ similar institutional opportunities for engagement. Future studies should examine whether group identity threat continues to enhance civic participation among non-college graduates within the Muslim community compared to other religious communities. Finally, this survey analysis can be further nuanced with qualitative studies to examine why Muslim students may or may not be engaged.

This dissertation revealed that there are important differences within the Muslim community along the lines of race, ethnicity, migrant background, and

gender. I plan to further examine these nuances as they relate to Muslims' civic and political engagement in my book. While Muslims are more likely to be civically engaged, to what extent is there engagement political? How do race, class and gender, and institutional belonging shape their engagement styles? My next step is to dive deep into my qualitative interview data with 85 Muslim students across the UC campuses to understand the intra-racial experiences of Muslims and how it relates to their engagement patterns.

Overall, this dissertation contributes insights into anti-Muslim racism as a fluid racial project and the ways that it manifests at individual, institutional and structural levels to shape the racialization and agency its targets. It offers an intersectional analysis between race and religion to reveal nuances within the Muslim community and across religious communities. Findings prompt a rethinking of the secular and race-neutral roles that universities play amidst state imperial and racial projects, as well as a monolithic conception of racialized religion. Future findings should examine how anti-Muslim racism is embedded within other institutions and what's needed for panethnoracial/religious mobilization among Muslims and other marginalized communities to combat White supremacy and its imperial foundations.

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